TESTS: *Kawasaki's Spectacular GPz750 Turbo, 12.4-second Honda 550 Nighthawk, Kawasaki KDX200 Woods Wonder*

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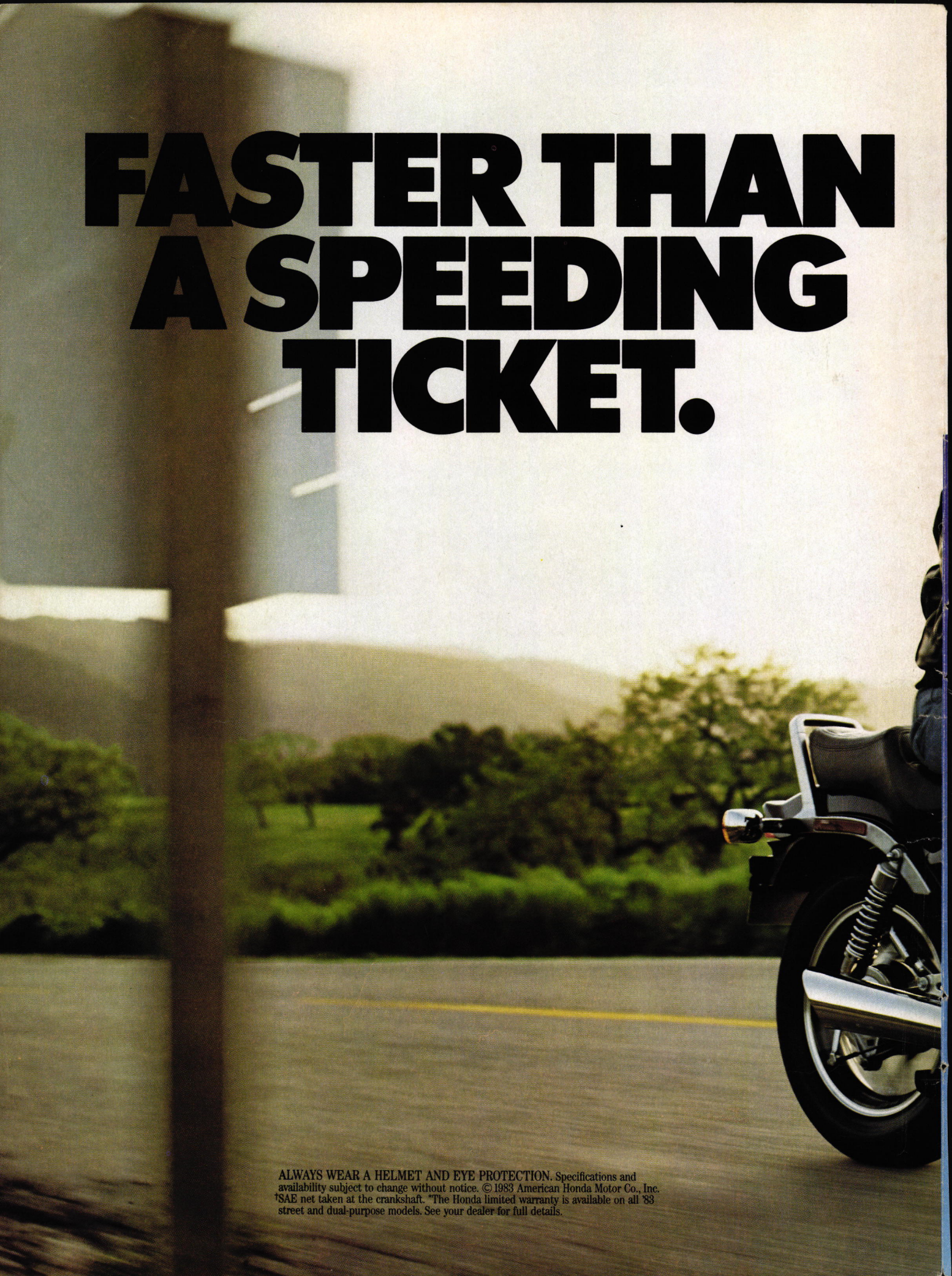
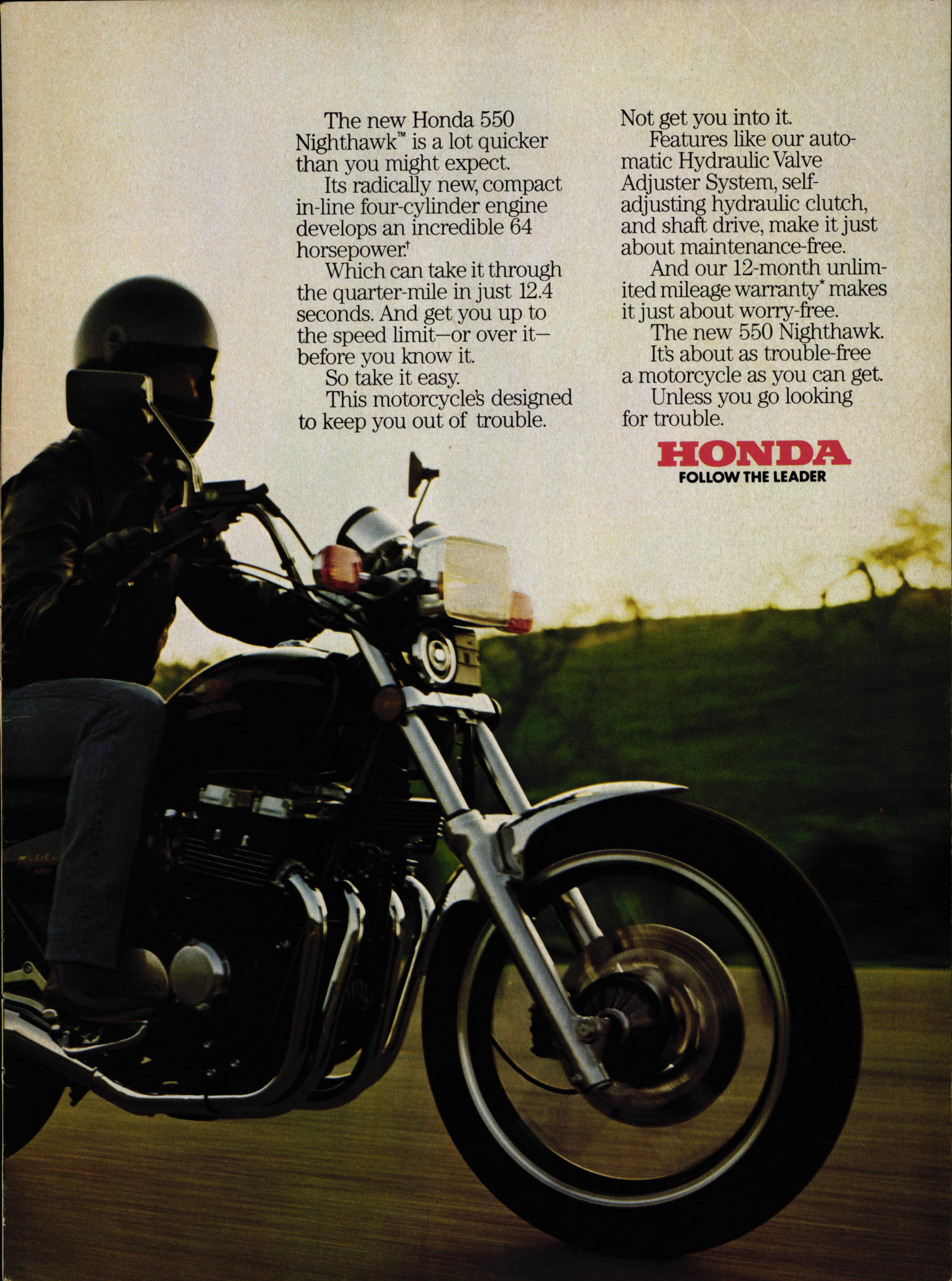


ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET AND EYE PROTECTION. Specifications and availability subject to change without notice. © 1983 American Honda Motor Co., Inc. †SAE net taken at the crankshaft. *The Honda limited warranty is available on all '83 street and dual-purpose models. See your dealer for full details.



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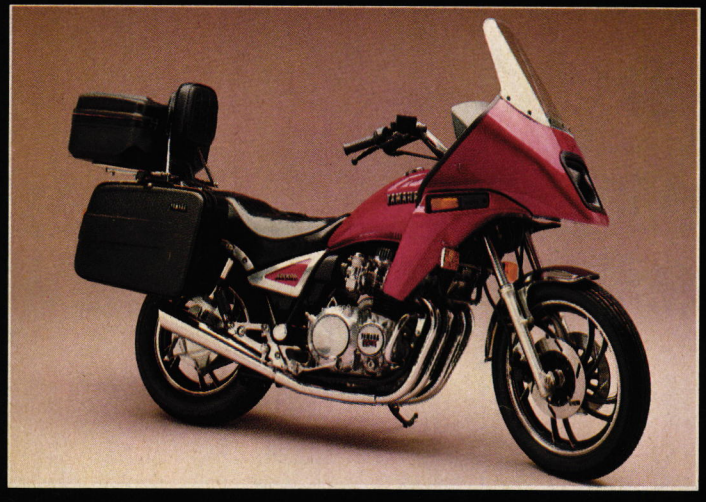

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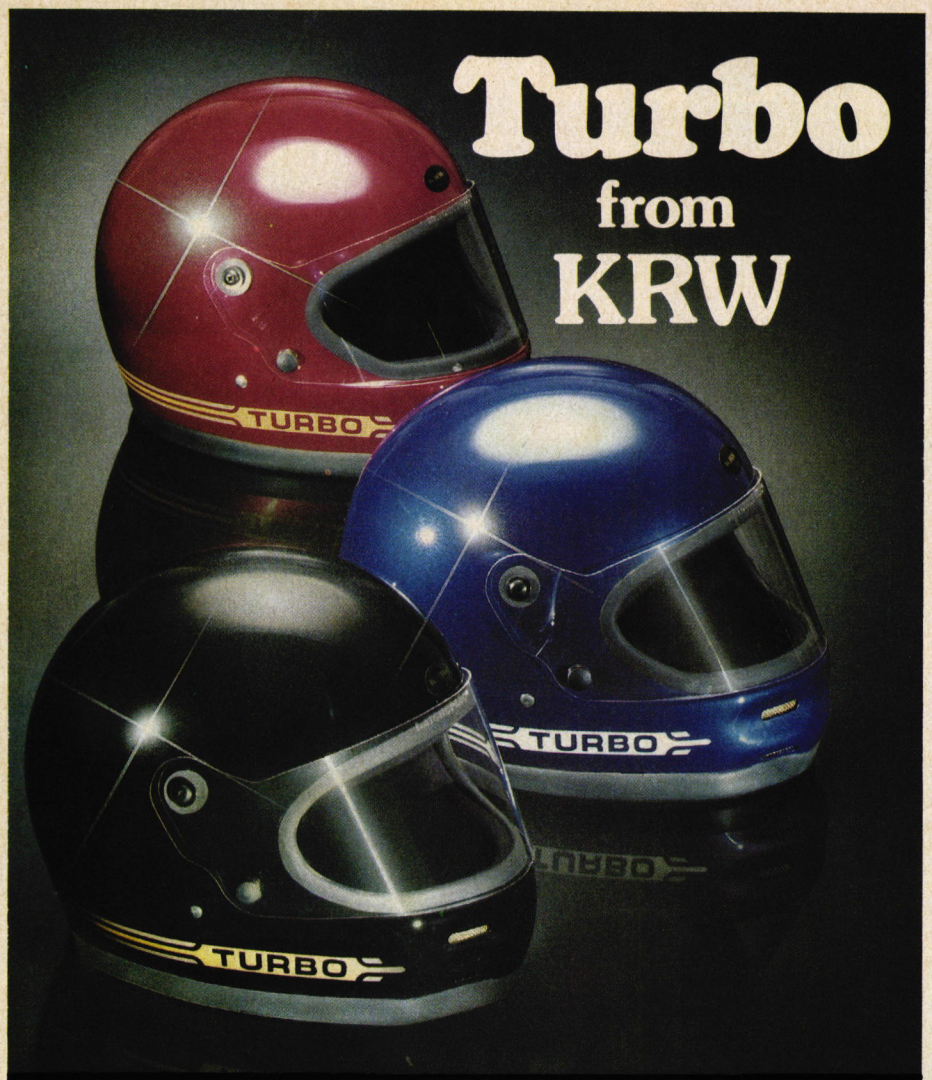
QUOTE:
". . . a turbobike has to be more than just fast; it must be the absolute flat-fastest motorcycle around."

—Pg. 22

ON THE COVER:
Public notice is hereby served that the Kawasaki 750 Turbo has assumed any and all debts owed to the motorcycling world by the institution of production turbocharging, and that all those debts are hereafter considered paid in full. Charles Everitt, acting as agent to said motorcycling world, acknowledges that all promises have been fulfilled—with interest—as witnessed by Paul Dean.



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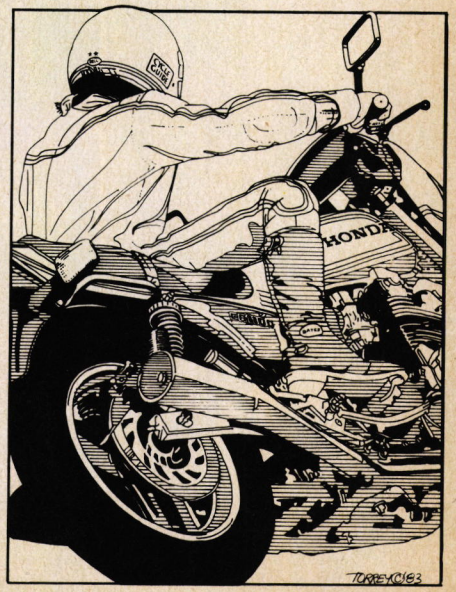

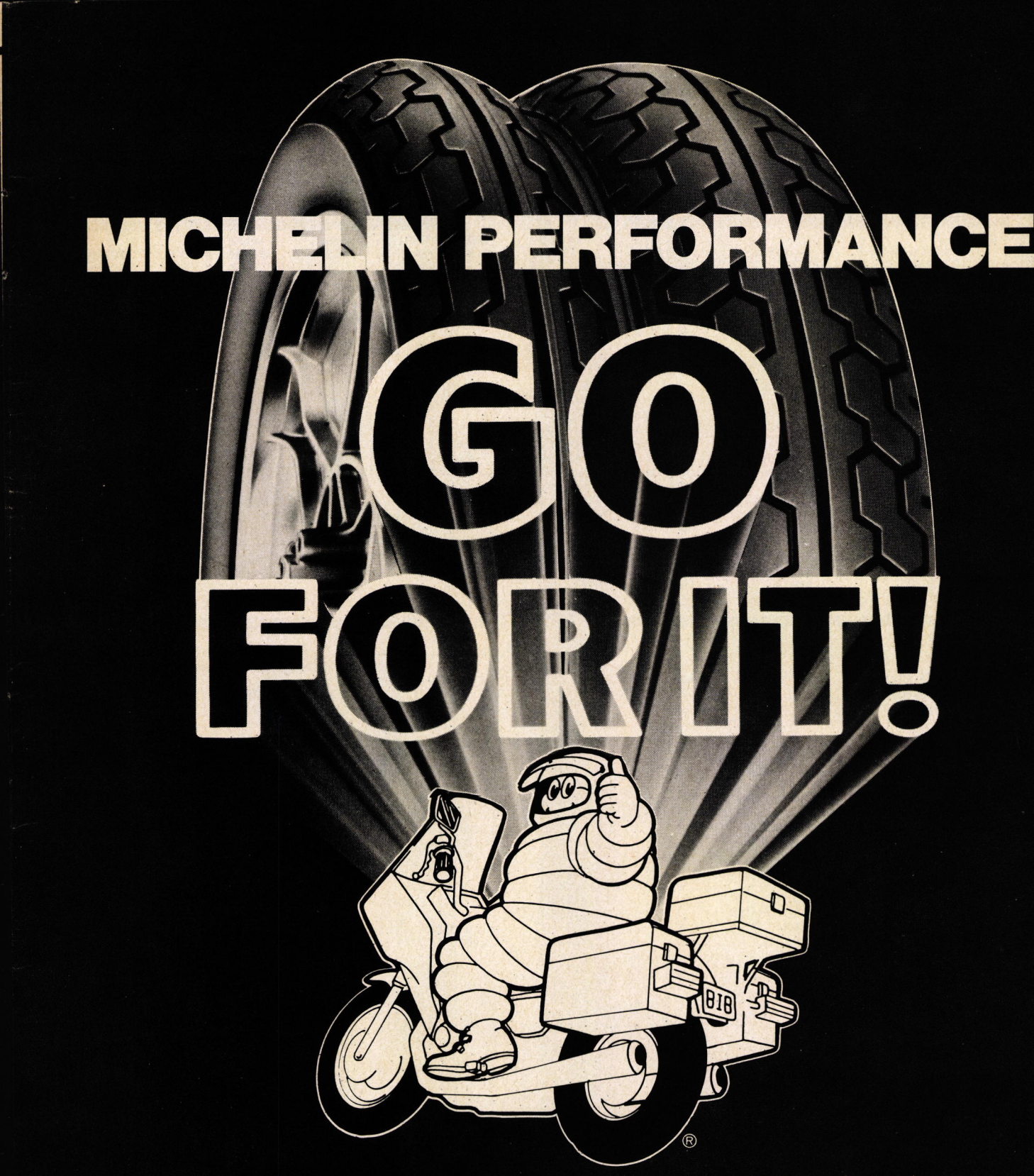

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Cycle Guide's catalog of recent test hardware—no brag, just fact

OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	TYPE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS.	RAKE/TRAIL, DEGREES/INCHES	GEARS
Can-Am Sonic MX-'83	January '83	Motocross	Four-stroke	11.6/12.1	272	28.0/4.2	5
Can-Am 500MX-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/12.0	272	28.0/4.2	5
Honda CR125R-'83	April '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	10.9/12.3	193	27.2/4.1	6
Honda CR250R-'83	February '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.5/12.2	217	26.8/4.0	5
Honda CR480R-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	12.0/12.3	226	26.0/3.9	5
Honda XR350R-'83	June '83	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.9/10.4	253	26.0/3.9	6
Husqvarna 250CR-'83	January '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.7	227	30.0/5.5	6
Husqvarna 430WR-'83	June '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.4/10.6	246	30.0/6.0	6
Husqvarna 500CR-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.8	240	30.0/5.5	4
Kawasaki KDX200-'83	July '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	9.8/11.0	213	28.0/4.8	
Kawasaki KX125-'82	November '82	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.2/11.4	200	28.0/4.8	6
Kawasaki KX500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/11.9	232	29.0/4.8	6
KTM MC 495-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.4	249	28.0/4.2	4
Maico 490 E-'83	December '82	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.9/12.6	261	27.5/4.6	5
Maico 490 Spider-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.2	240	27.0/4.7	4
Suzuki ALT50-'83	June '83	ATV	Two-stroke	N/A	90	N/A	1
Suzuki DR250-'82	December '82	Trail	Four-stroke	9.7/10.3	259	28.2/4.6	5
Suzuki PE175-'82	September '82	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/9.8	229	28.0/4.4	6
Suzuki RM125-'82	November '82	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.2/12.6	197	29.5/4.8	6
Suzuki RM250-'83	February '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	10.7/12.4	219	29.7/4.8	5
Suzuki RM500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.8	234	29.7/4.8	4
Yamaha YZ250-'83	March '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.3	217	28.0/4.7	5
Yamaha YZ490-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.5	227	28.5/4.7	4

STREET

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE	DISPLACEMENT, CC	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS.	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW R65 LS-'82	April '82	2C/G	649.6	14.15/92.4	110	417	35–50	139
BMW R100RT-'82	May '82	2C/G	979.9	13.86/95.1	122	523	35–50	148
H-D FLH Classic-'82	August '82	45-deg. 2D/F	1338.6	15.47/82.0	101	752	32–42	180
H-D FXRS-'82	December '81	45-deg. 2D/F	1338.6	13.92/93.1	109	594	40–47	124
H-D XLS Roadster-'83	April '83	45-deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.84/93.9	106	515	43–55	138
HD XLX-61-'83	June '83	45-deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.45/95.9	106	488	40–72	128
Honda CBX400F-'82	October '82	4A/F	399.1	13.59/96.5	110	402	34–58	128
Honda CB1100F-'83	January '83	4A/F	1062.2	11.22/119.8	144	550	33–46	135
Honda CX650 Custom-'83	May '83	80-deg. 2E/G	673.5	12.56/103.0	119	454	38–48	124
Honda CX650 Turbo-'83	March '83	80-deg. 2E/G	673.5	12.09/111.7	137	538	25–44	124
Honda FT500 Ascot-'82	August '82	1 B/F	497.7	14.92/83.7	97	360	47–54	146
Honda GL1100-'82	April '82	4C/G	1085.0	12.60/106.5	139	606	41–49	N/A
Honda GL1100A Aspencade-'83	February '83	4C/G	1085.0	13.51/96.0	152	752	32–46	131
Honda GL1100I Interstate-'82	April '82	4C/G	1085.0	13.30/99.5	139	697	40–50	N/A
Honda Nighthawk 550-'83	July '83	4A/G	572.3	12.46/102.9	114	429	37–49	125
Honda Nighthawk 650-'83	December '83	4A/G	656.0	12.28/108.0	122	451	28–51	128
Honda Nighthawk 750-'82	March '82	4A/F	748.7	12.74/103.8	131	543	36–49	128
Honda V45 Interceptor-'83	May '83	90-deg. 4D/F	748.1	11.96/111.7	138	511	31–40	116
Honda V45 Magna-'82	June '82	90-deg. 4D/G	748.1	12.34/105.9	129	507	30–46	124
Honda V45 Sabre-'82	June '82	90-deg. 4D/G	748.1	12.37/106.8	128	511	29–47	149
Honda VT750C Shadow-'83	April '83	45-deg. 2D/G	749.6	12.91/100.8	127	484	48–55	132
Kawasaki GPz550-'83	June '83	4A/F	553.8	12.65/102.9	132	438	42–62	144
Kawasaki GPz750-'83	February '83	4A/F	739.0	12.16/109.2	134	498	35–51	136
Kawasaki GPz750 Turbo-'83	July '83	4A/F	739.0	11.22/123.5	146	514	N/A	N/A
Kawasaki GPz1100-'82	May '82	4A/F	1089.9	11.33/119.4	137	534	35–48	127
Kawasaki KZ550 Spectre-'83	May '83	4A/G	553.8	13.35/96.8	116	441	44–56	137
Kawasaki KZ750-L3-'83	January '83	4A/F	739.0	12.09/108.6	134	487	47–53	132
Kawasaki KZ750 LTD-'82	December '82	4A/F	739.0	12.56/105.3	131	474	41–55	131
Kawasaki KZ1000R-'82	November '82	4A/F	998.6	11.85/116.7	134	505	35–49	129
Kawasaki KZ1100 Spectre-'82	March '82	4A/G	1089.9	11.98/110.4	142	553	36–44	132
Suzuki GS450E-'83	January '83	2A/F	448.2	14.25/93.2	106	384	39–49	131
Suzuki GS450G Automatic-'83	February '83	2A/G	448.2	16.41/82.3	94	410	36–59	143
Suzuki GS550E-'83	June '83	4A/F	572.3	12.59/105.0	120	443	39–47	135
Suzuki GS750E-'82	January '82	4A/F	747.4	12.01/109.1	127	519	34–49	127
Suzuki GS1000S Katana-'81	December '81	4A/F	997.5	11.40/118.7	141	525	33–51	129
Suzuki GS1100E-'82	May '82	4A/F	1074.9	11.20/119.3	141	530	37–49	132
Suzuki GS1100G-'82	September '82	4A/G	1074.9	11.92/114.2	137	555	42–48	138
Suzuki GS1100GK-'82	October '82	4A/G	1074.9	12.58/104.5	137	647	31–44	155
Suzuki XN85 Turbo-'83	March '83	4A/F	673.9	12.38/107.1	132	521	34–46	120
Yamaha XS400 Seca-'82	December '82	2A/F	399.4	14.50/89.2	110	382	37–57	140
Yamaha XJ650 Seca-'82	September '82	4A/G	653.4	13.06/103.3	126	543	35–53	126
Yamaha XJ650 Turbo-'83	March '83	4A/G	653.4	13.06/103.3	126	543	35–53	126
Yamaha XS400 Maxim-'82	November '82	2A/F	399.4	14.65/89.3	104	376	52–61	136
Yamaha 750 Virago-'82	January '82	75-deg. 2D/G	748.8	13.28/99.8	105	481	43–48	132
Yamaha 920 Virago-'83	April '83	75-deg. 2D/G	920.0	12.84/101.5	108	503	38–45	138
Yamaha XV920R-'82	February '82	75-deg. 2D/F	920.0	13.10/100.4	112	509	37–51	128

***A**-Transverse Vertical, **B**-Vertical (single-cylinder only), **C**-Horizontally Opposed, **D**-Tandem Vee, **E**-Transverse Vee, **F**-Chain Final Drive, **G**-Shaft Final Drive, **H**-Belt Final Drive

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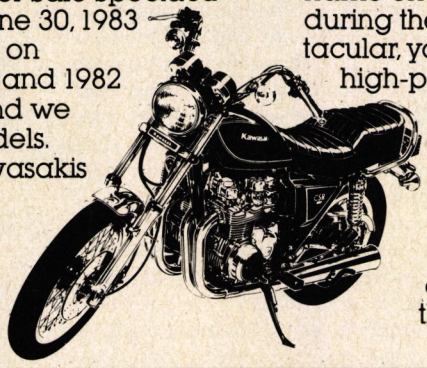
Save $310 to $750 on a brand-new Kawasaki

It's the Kawasaki Summer Sale Spectacular! And from now until June 30, 1983 you can get huge savings on selected, brand-new 1981 and 1982 Kawasaki motorcycles. And we don't mean just a few models. There are 17 different Kawasakis now on sale with savings ranging up to $750!

With all these great machines to choose from, you know one's got your name on it. And with the huge savings during the Kawasaki Summer Sale Spectacular, you can have a sharp-looking, high-performance Kawasaki under you, and you can keep the change. Up to $750! Just look at these deals:



For your brand-new Kawasaki at these unheard of prices, get it in gear and head down to your nearby Kawasaki dealer today. He's got the bikes that can save you big money.

1981 MODELS	ORIGINAL PRICE*	SALE PRICE†	SAVINGS
KZ250-D2	$1299	$ 989	$310
KZ305-A1	$1499	$1099	$400
KZ440-B2	$1669	$1299	$370
KZ440-A2	$1899	$1449	$450
KZ440-D2/D3	$1929	$1499	$430
KZ550-C2	$2419	See dealer	See dealer
KZ550-A2	$2299	See dealer	See dealer
KZ650-H1	$2649	$1899	$750

1982 MODELS	ORIGINAL PRICE*	SALE PRICE†	SAVINGS
KZ250-L1	$1399	$ 999	$400
KZ305-A2	$1549	$1169	$380
KZ305-B1	$1599	$1199	$400
KZ440-G1	$1799	$1399	$400
KZ440-A3	$1949	$1499	$450
KZ440-D4	$1999	$1549	$450
KZ550-C3	$2549	$1999	$550
KZ550-A3	$2399	$1999	$400
KZ650-H2	$2649	$1999	$650

*Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price October 1, 1982.
†Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price. Actual prices set by dealers. Taxes, license, freight, options and other dealer charges extra.

Kawasaki

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Availability may be limited. Specifications subject to change without notice.
Kawaski believes in riding safely. Check local laws before you ride. Member AMA and MSF. Offer expires June 30, 1983.

Contact Points

Team Endorphin

Checks, drugs and violence.

• I'm hurting.

Yeah, I know, some of you are saying, "So what else is new?" But I speak here of acute, physical pain; limited movement, a heavy aspirin diet.

Now, I know that everyone who races motorcycles gets hurt once in a while, but my own competition injuries have been few and minor. In the past 20 years I have hit the deck in scrambles, trials, motocross and roadracing, and I've yet to splinter a bone. Even during one MX season in Ohio when I was called, not inaccurately, Thud Rafferty.

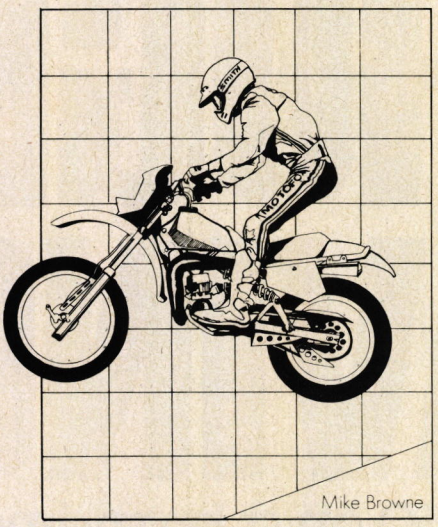
But, beyond the obligatory scrapes and bruises, mine has been a relatively painless racing career. 'Til now. And now the reasons have become more . . . uh, painfully clear.

First the obvious: Youth vs. Age. The possibility of injury just doesn't figure strongly in the young man's race strategy. Sure, the self-protective instinct is *there*, but it functions at the basic, animal level of survival. As a conscious, limiting force on performance, caution is an abstraction. It doesn't win races. When in doubt, gas it.

Ironically, that very capacity for fearless effort, the ability to *contend* at peak athetic form, prevents far more injuries than it causes. It's when the potential pain factor, the old PPF, creeps into the picture that mistakes are made. In the psychological sense, the PPF index simply tends to rise with age. And in the more tangible physical sense, the older the bones and muscles, the slower the knitting process.

Okay. That's all more or less apparent; facts of life, nature's way of telling us, and so forth. Less obvious is the role of drugs in all this. I mean those wonderful controlled substances that our bodies release in response to pain: endorphins. One of these built-in chemical balms, etorphine, is said to be 10,000 times more powerful than morphine. (Makes you wonder about those guys who crash *all* the time.)

At the recent Hi-Mountain Enduro, I do believe my etorphine prescription was used up for the rest of the year. It was one of those vicious, downhill endos; I landed on my head and so did the IT465. Then it lit on my arm. The Yamaha was uninjured, but I couldn't say the same. I was out.



See, falling well is, like motorcycle racing itself, a combination of grace and violence. The fall can be exquisitely graceful, and the landing can be genuinely violent. This time, violence won.

But only temporarily, or so it seemed. Here I should point out that this was my first enduro, a fitting occasion for my Worst Dirt Crash. Fitting if only because it was so unexpected.

Because I had always figured that enduros were easy. Not like *real* racing. I mean, a race is where everyone lines up together, takes off simultaneously, and whoever's in front after a given time or distance is the winner. Enduros were wimp races; speed averages, checkpoints, mathematical mumbo jumbo. Too much strategy, not enough speed.

From my new perspective, born of pain and agony, that assessment lacks a few salient facts. First, once a rider falls behind the appointed speed average in an enduro, he must ride faster to avoid losing points at all the successive checks. Riding faster, combined with a millisecond's inattention and the lip of a downhill water bar, can increase the deficit. The check crew cares not that you knocked yourself out trying to get there on time. The clock rules.

Also, unlike his closed-course counterpart in motocross or roadracing, the enduro rider doesn't always know what's around the next turn. Going fast becomes a whole new game when you don't know where the track goes.

And so, armed with this new knowledge, which flashed into my consciousness like a sharp blow to the head, I was up and underway again. But *late*. By damn, this was a RACE!

Now I was on drugs. I didn't know that I'd been out, that my helmet was cracked, or that my right forearm was achieving Popeye proportions. Only that I was late. The little pharmacist in my brain was filling prescriptions like crazy.

"Here, get this stuff down to the arm, right away! Hey, you cells over there not doing anything, deliver this medication to the lower back! And stop to see how things are going at the shoulder on your way back."

Naturally, quite naturally in fact, a wonderful sense of well-being attends all this chemical activity. Stocked with a healthy supply of painkillers, Team Endorphin can cancel the agony as if by magic. But, again, only temporarily.

The first indication of damage came at the next check, when my neck refused to permit my head enough tilt to see the scorecard on the tank. That happened to be the check where the local humorists had dammed up the creek crossing to watch the Bultacos water-out. I had to laugh. That hurt, too.

Still, for the next 30 miles I rode fast, picking up a minute here, a few more seconds there. On the fast fireroads the Yamaha was in its element, sliding nicely, eating away at the clock.

But it was just about closing time at the pharmacy, as well. Back in the starting area at Turkey Flats (true), I had worked the deficit down to two minutes. With two minutes left to gas up and start the second loop, I swung off the bike and learned that all my metabolic medics had clocked out for the day.

Riding had been okay under the drug therapy program, but walking wasn't covered by the same policy. After a brief impression of Tim Conway's geriatric shuffle, I mounted up. Racer's Instinct forced the right leg, painfully, to start the bike. The eyes of Middle Age looked up the trail, at the ascent to Howard's Hill. The thumb of Common Sense pushed the kill button.

Nothing, the saying goes, exceeds like excess. Healing begins with the knowledge that your prescription has expired.

—T.J. Rafferty

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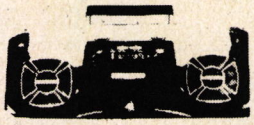

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Briefly Magnetic: Marsee's briefcase-styled Super Maxi tankbag won't stick to your ribs, but its eight magnets should make it stick to your bike's gas tank. Just in case, though, a nylon lanyard attaches to the handlebar to keep the 616-cubic-inch bag from going too far. Other features include two-way zippers, two inside pockets and construction of water-resistant Cordura nylon. Suggested retail price is $64.95. For more information, write Marsee, Dept. CG, Box 300, Convoy, Ohio 45832.

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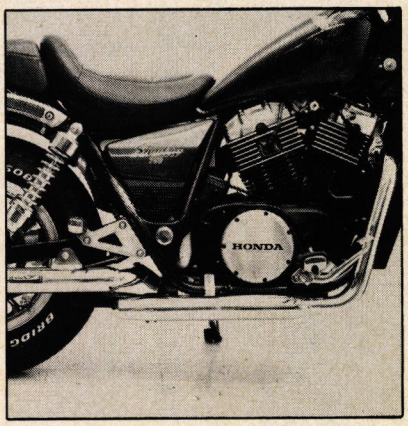

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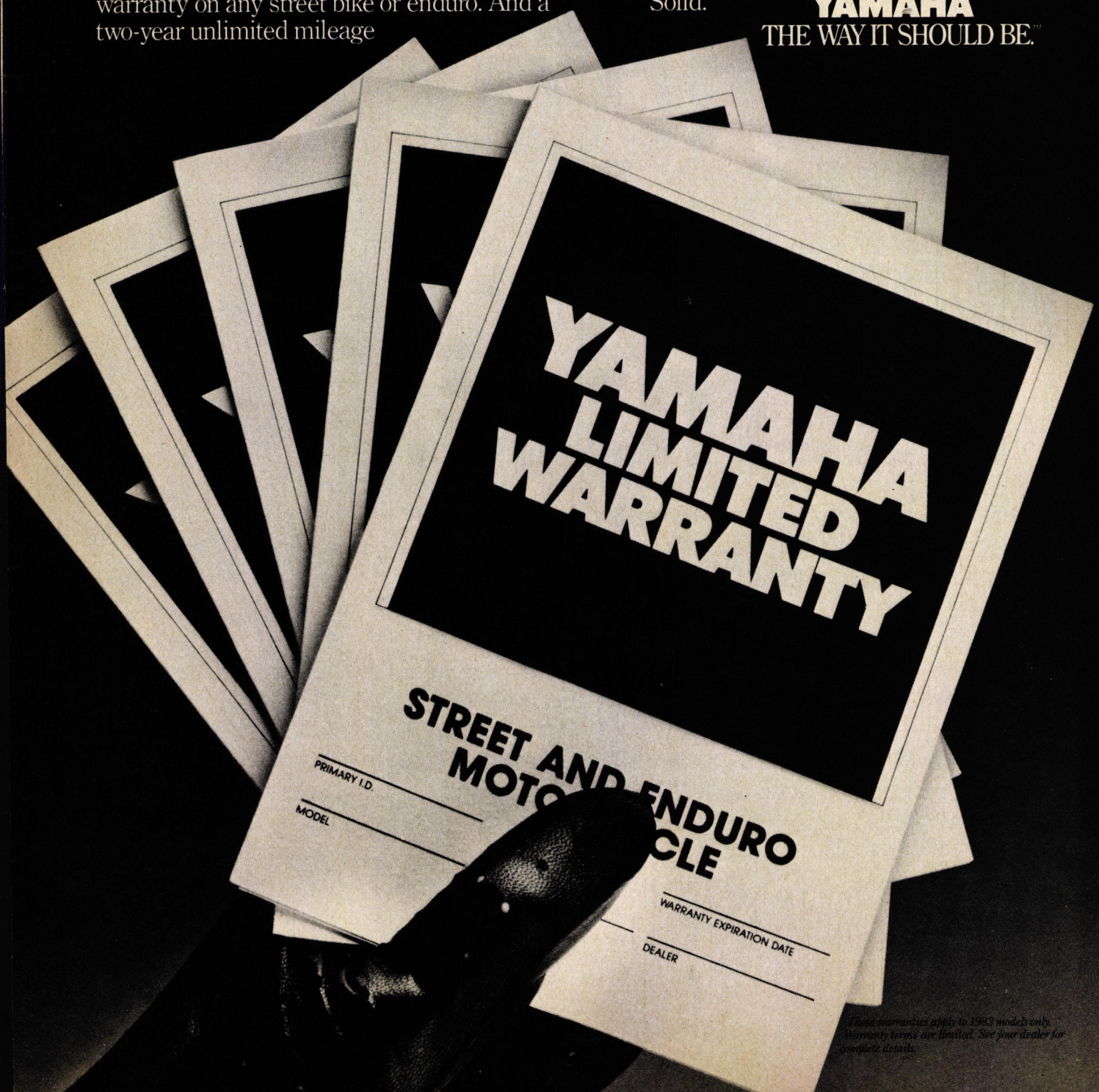

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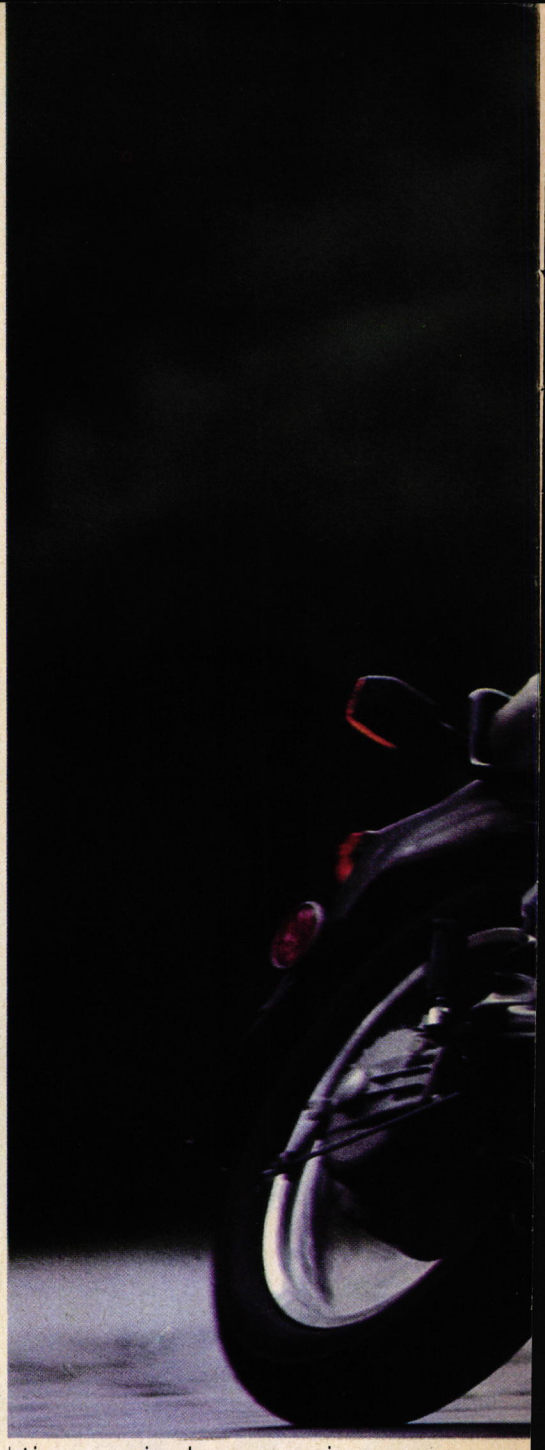
BMW'S NEW R80ST. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MOTORCYCLE RIDING AND MOTORCYCLE WRESTLING.



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Accordingly, you are looking at a rare exception to the 800cc class: the new BMW R80ST.

A motorcycle that requires less brawn and, some would say, more brains to ride.

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And partly because what little weight it has is slung remarkably low, compliments of its horizontally opposed twin-cylinder engine.

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A machine built to the standards of German engineers whose passion for hand craftsmanship and meticulous refinement results in motorcycles that "...retain their taut, solid feel when lesser motorcycles have long since gotten loose and rattly" (Cycle Magazine).

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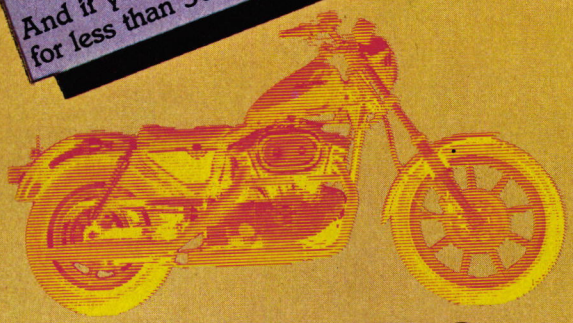

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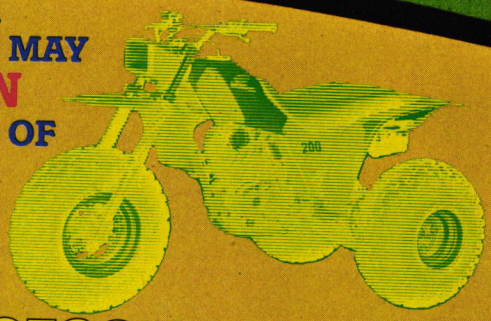

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7. A partial list of prize winners will be available after February 1, 1984.

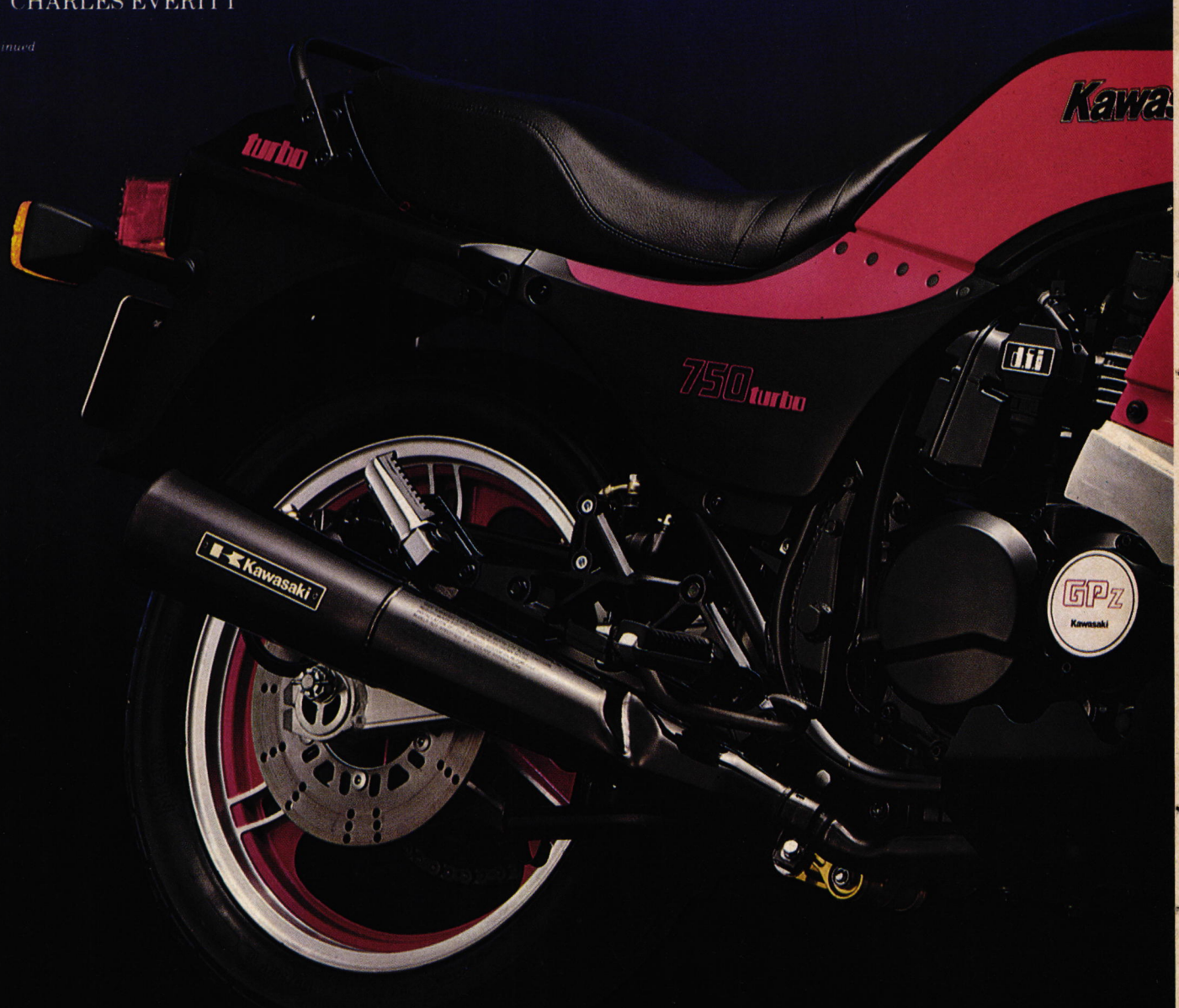
TURBOSPORT FILE, ENTRY NO. 3:

Kawasaki GPz750 TURBO

Leave it to Kawasaki to make the right connection between turbocharging and horsepower.

BY CHARLES EVERITT

Continued



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TURBO

The original promise of turbocharging seemed to have it all. There would be a new breed of middleweight motorcycle with big-bike performance and only minor increases in weight and complexity. An admirable goal, but it denied a simple fact. When most riders hear "turbocharging," they focus on one thing: horsepower—rip-snorting, pavement-shredding horsepower. And to them, therefore, a turbobike has to be more than just fast; it must be the absolute flat-fastest motorcycle around.

Kawasaki saw the turbo/horsepower connection just as clearly. And so, the last of the Japanese manufacturers to enter the turbo arena picked its shot and produced the most horsepower-intensive boostbike yet, the GPz750 Turbo. This Turbozee bristles with a claimed 112 horsepower and scorches through the quarter-mile in just over 11 seconds, accelerating with a ferocity that can suck the breath out of its rider while leaving other turbobikes—and most normally aspirated motorcycles, for that matter—in its howling, whining wake.

Such breathtaking performance typifies Kawasaki's customary approach to building motorcycles, and the Turbozee follows the pattern. Starting in 1980, the firm developed a 650cc turbo prototype that generated some impressive numbers of its own: a claimed 100 horsepower and a 400-meter E.T. of 11.3 seconds. But as powerful as that prototype was, Kawasaki wanted an even bigger buffer between the Turbo and its nearest competitor. It became imperative for Kawasaki's boostbike to be even more powerful, to be *the* fastest motorcycle of *any* kind, blown or unblown.

To achieve that goal, Kawasaki avoided the trap of rushing to be first on the showroom floor with a production Turbo. Rather, the corporate plan was to hold back and observe the performance of the other Turbos, all the while developing and refining prototypes. All-out performance was at stake, and nothing but a clear-cut victory fit into Kawasaki's plans. To insure that success, Kawasaki upped the turbo displacement ante and chose its existing 739cc, transverse four-cylinder engine as the basis for the GPz Turbo. That's significant, since it gives the Turbozee a 65cc-85cc displacement edge over the current crop of turbobikes, virtually guaranteeing better off-boost performance. Furthermore, as the Turbo's designation implies, not only the engine but the entire bike is based on the 1983 GPz750 (February 1983 issue).

Surprisingly, the GPz's engine required only minor fettling to withstand life under the 10.8 psi of pressure (see "Turbo By Kawasaki," page 31) from its Hitachi HT-10B turbo unit. In fact, Kawasaki's example of the pressurized genre incorporates fewer engine changes

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than do any of the other three production boostbikes. But while the number of internal engine changes is limited, the GPz Turbo's performance is anything but, whether measured by turbobike or nonturbobike standards. In fact, the Turbo's claimed 112 horsepower at 9000 rpm is only 8 horses shy of the GPz1100's claimed horsepower peak.

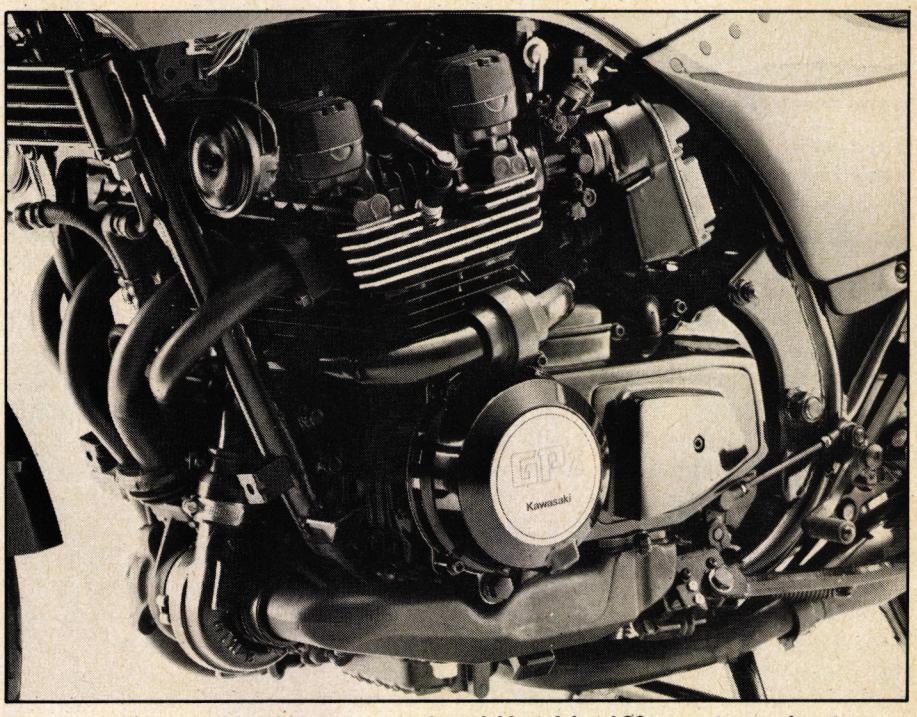
That much fury contained in a 750 is almost unbelievable, which is why we had to try it ourselves to be convinced. And so we went to Japan as the first motojournalists to test a final prototype of the 1984-model GPz750 Turbo.

Part of our testing included quarter-mile runs at the Japanese Automobile Research Institute (JARI), and the results were nothing short of astounding. The Turbozee turned consistent mid-11-second runs, with a best time of 11.225 seconds at 123.53 mph. That means not only can the Turbo absolutely flatten its boostbike rivals, it can do 1100s in the eye, too. The quickest contemporary production bike CYCLE GUIDE has tested, Suzuki's GS1100E, bettered the Turbo's time by a mere .02 seconds. That small difference is even more impressive when you consider that a dragstrip actually puts turboed motorcycles at a disadvantage. Boostbikes are harder to launch than their normally aspirated counterparts, and the Turbo we rode was minus its LCD boost gauge, which made every launch something of a guessing game. Consequently, we believe the GPz750 Turbo has the potential to turn even quicker times.

Indeed, the Turbo's surprising performance within the dragstrip's narrow, numbered reality can't begin to prepare you for how hard the bike accelerates. Especially in the lower gears, when boost kicks in at about 5000 rpm, the Turbozee snaps its rider's head back and stretches his arms as if the bike had been catapulted from the deck of an aircraft carrier. And the *sound* it makes; the turbocharger's whine blends with the characteristic GPz muted exhaust howl into a chilling, F4 Phantomlike texture of high-performance noise.

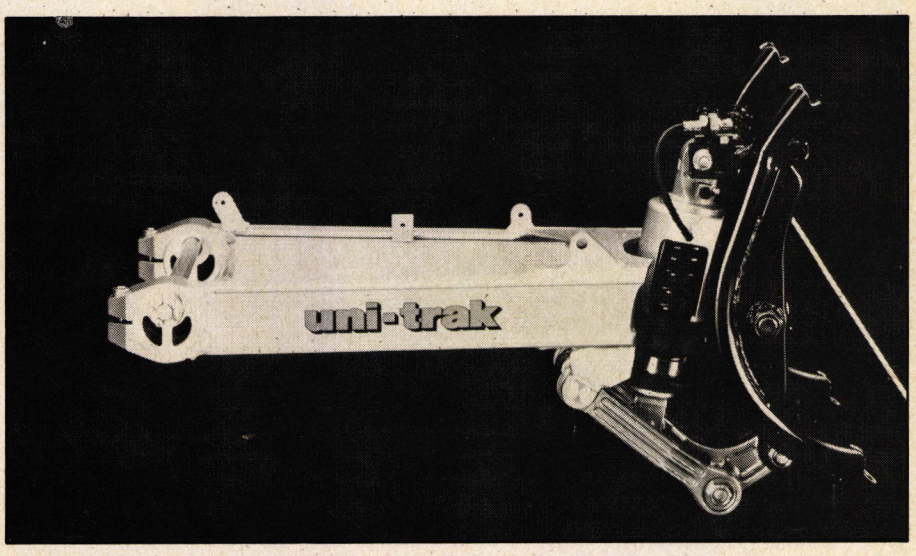
That kind of irresistible, intoxicating power and the abrupt transition onto boost can make a rider positively giddy, and first- and second-gear wheelies become optional. The power comes on more smoothly in the higher gears, but it still keeps on building; leave the throttle on and the engine pulls *hard* right up to the onset of valve-float at about 10,200 rpm.

Off-boost performance, however, isn't nearly as scintillating, but that's not too



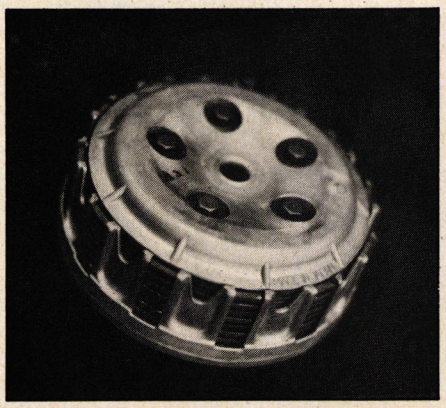
Turbocharging Kawasaki's 739cc transverse four yields a claimed 30 percent power boost

Only the compression ratio, spark advance, and cam lift and duration are reduced.



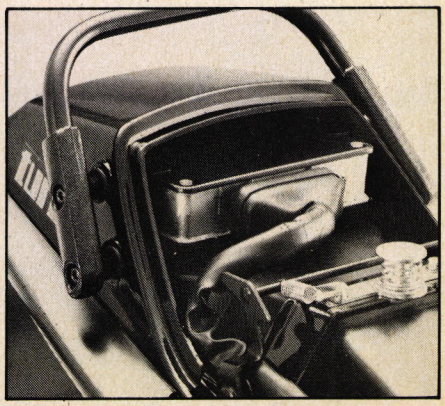
Different leverage ratio gives GPz Turbo's Uni-Trak more progressive rising rate

To go along with a 0.5mm-thicker-walled swingarm and a revised rear shock.



GPz750-issue clutch has reinforced hub

And one extra friction plate.



DFI computer lives in Turbo's tail-section

And has self-diagnostic capability.

Continued

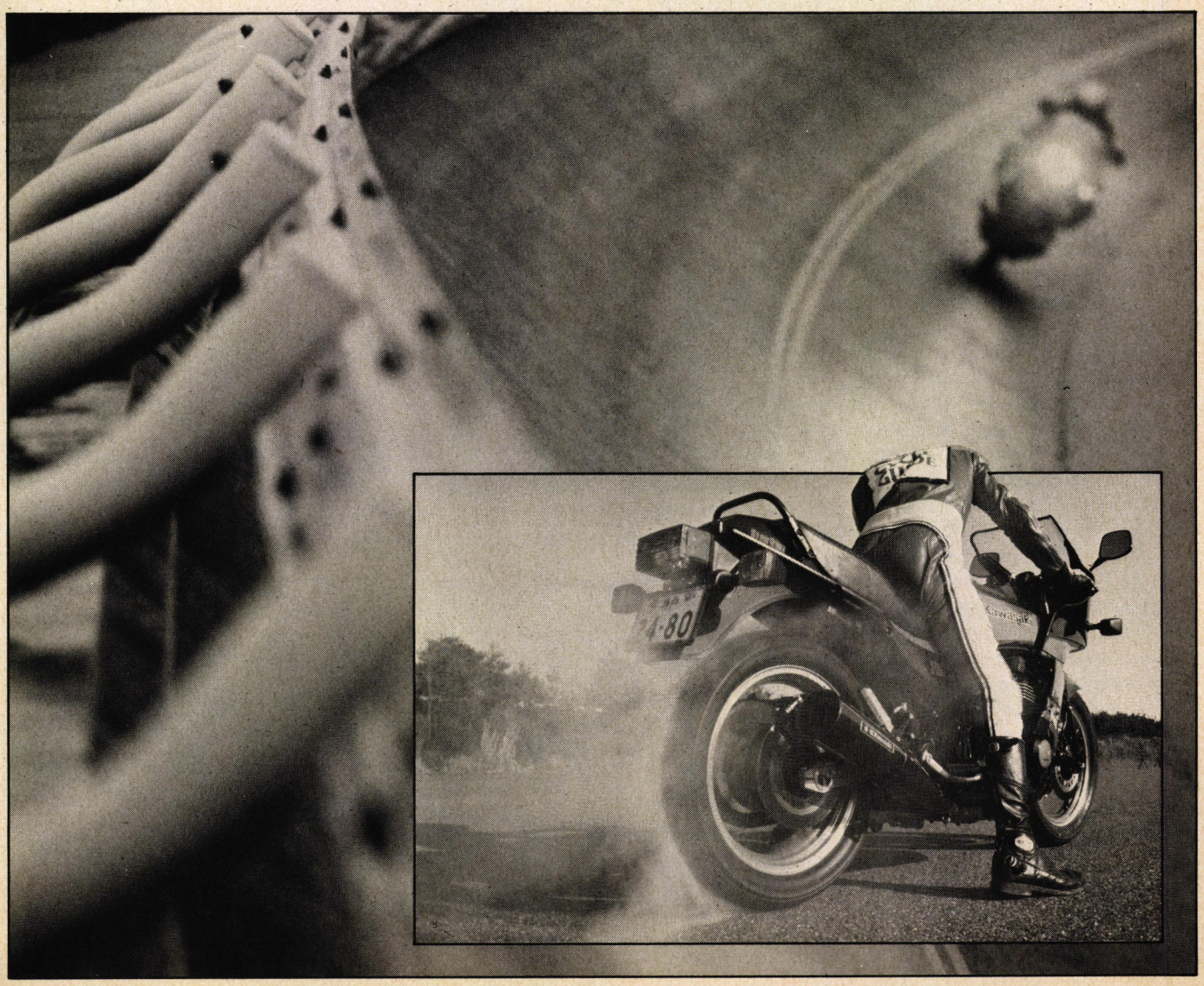
TURBO

surprising. Turbocharging the GPz forced certain engine-tuning concessions, such as a lower compression ratio and less camshaft duration, so the unpressurized performance couldn't help being diminished. Taller gearing than a GPz's also played a part in notching back the Turbo's off-boost acceleration, as did a claimed additional 30 pounds over the GPz750's 498-pound dry weight. Still, compared to the other three production turbobikes, the Kawasaki has better off-boost power; and whether or not that added thrust is mostly a function of the GPz's larger displacement is academic. It *still* puts the motor on the other turbos.

In terms of throttle response, too, the GPz Turbo feels superior to the other boostbikes. Its electronic fuel injection system, similar to that used on 1982 and 1983 GPz1100s, has been recalibrated to suit the Turbo's pressurized life, and it works flawlessly, reacting instantly and accurately to throttle input. You can let the revs drop to 1500 rpm in top gear, then roll on the throttle, and the engine just pulls, unhesitatingly and without any sign of discomfort, even on an uphill grade. And as for turbo lag, that bane of boostbikes, the GPz Turbo acts like it never heard of the expression; opening the throttle while the engine is in its boost-producing rev-range provides almost immediate response.

Granted, then, the GPz Turbo has a wonderful, powerful engine. But such power demands a chassis of equal character to get around corners quickly, without undue drama. And because the Turbo is based on Kawasaki's racer-sharp 1983 GPz750, it has such a chassis. The frame itself, like the engine, received some minor alterations for turbo-duty, including a 20mm-longer steering head for more rigidity, a larger-diameter/thinner-wall backbone tube, rigid engine mounts in place of the '83 GPz750's rubber mounts, and slightly different gusseting. The hollow, rectangular-section extruded-aluminum swingarm pivots in needle bearings on both sides with an extra ball bearing on the right side, just like on the standard GPz750, but the swingarm gained an extra 0.5mm of wall-thickness. And both motorcycles share the same basic steering geometry of 28 degrees of steering head angle and 4.61 inches of trail.

You could expect the Turbo, then, to steer and handle much like the normally aspirated GPz750, and that's exactly the case. During high-speed riding around JARI's 3.3-mile oval track, at a top speed of 146 mph on the straightaways and at 130 mph through the 45 degree banked turns, the Turbo exhibited the same rock-solid stability found in the '83 GPz750. And, again like the '83 GPz, the



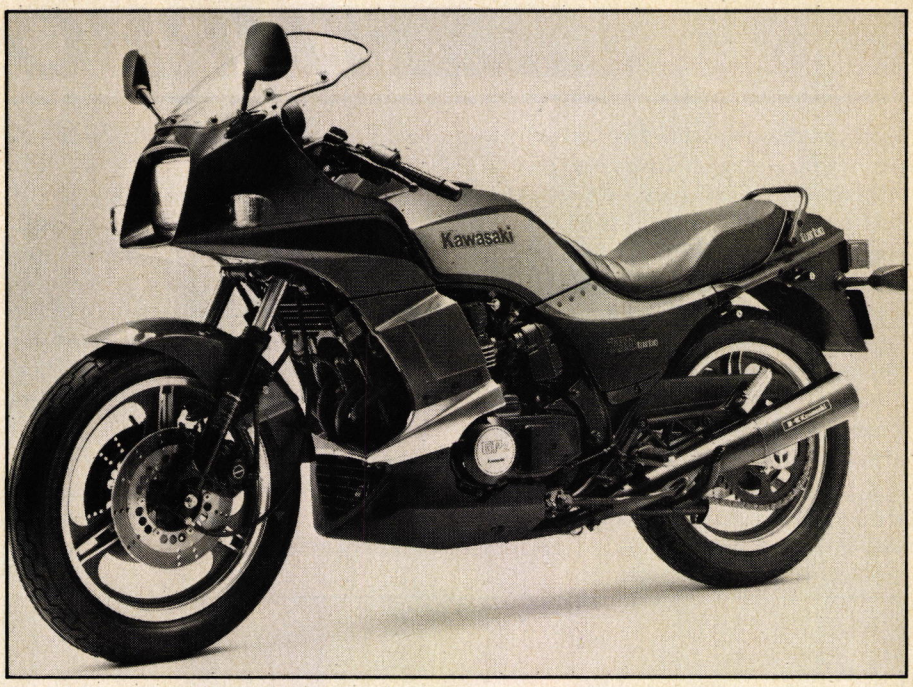
same stability that inspires confidence in fast corners makes for high-effort steering in slow corners. The steering geometry is on the slow side to begin with, and the stubby, quasi clip-on handlebars don't offer much leverage, so a rider has to work hard in close-quarters, cut-and-thrust turns. The Turbo also has a more pronounced reluctance to lean while braking than the '83 GPz750, which reflects the Turbo's extra weight.

Some of that added avoirdupois comes from the Turbo's full fairing, which, like the tendency to stand up under braking, sets the Turbo apart from the GPz. The fairing's ABS-plastic top half provides good weather protection for the rider, without creating back-drafts or buffeting, while the aluminum mid-section and PBT-plastic (stronger and more heat-resistant than ABS, according to Kawasaki engineers) undercowling duct cooling air to the engine and turbocharger.

Exiting slow corners from behind the Turbo's fairing takes more than just extra steering effort, though, because the sudden power delivery in the lower gears can make the hard-compound Michelin M48 rear tire break loose; the bike needs to be fairly upright and pointed in the right direction before boost comes on. Fast, fourth- or fifth-gear corners pose less of a problem, since even if boost comes on while the bike is leaned over, the upper-gear power delivery is much smoother.

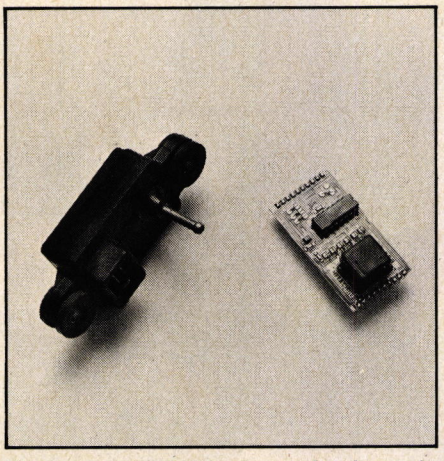
With such phenomenal acceleration available at the flick of a wrist, quick exits from one corner can turn into ohmigod entrances into the next, and braking ability assumes paramount importance. So, Kawasaki gave the 750 Turbo some extra help, increasing the effective diameter of all three discs by 10mm over the '83 GPz750's discs. There's plenty of stopping power on hand at moderate lever-pressure, and the brakes aren't oversensitive.

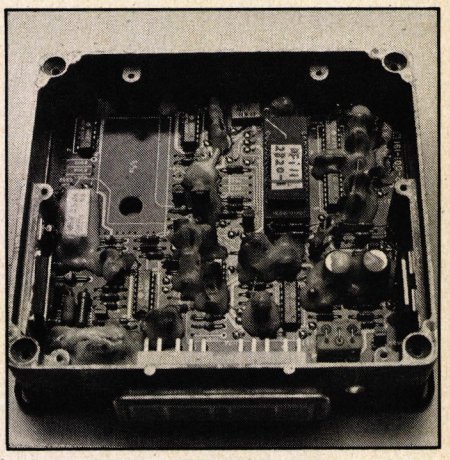
On the other hand, Kawasaki's hydraulically actuated anti-dive system deserves no such accolades, since it doesn't prevent nose-dive during hard braking. Valves in each of the Turbo's two anti-dive units, controlled by brakeline hydraulic pressure, restrict orifices to provide double the compression damping of that provided by the '83 GPz750's anti-dive setup. But, as on the GPz, the Turbo's anti-dive system is adjustable only for the point at which the spring-loaded internal valves blow-off, not for the actual amount of damping restriction. Even with the system set at its third (hardest) setting, a heavy hand on the front brake



GPz750 lost little of its identity in the turbo-transformation

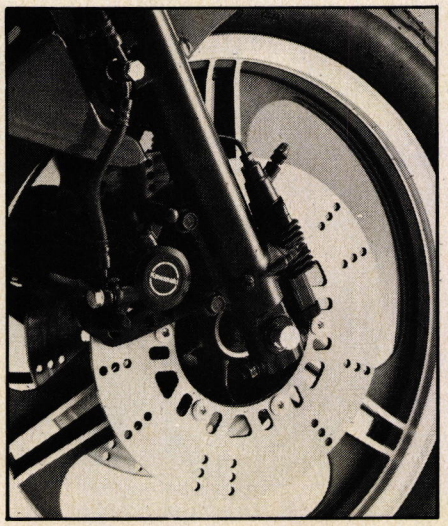
But it gained an ability to accelerate that makes literbikes envious.





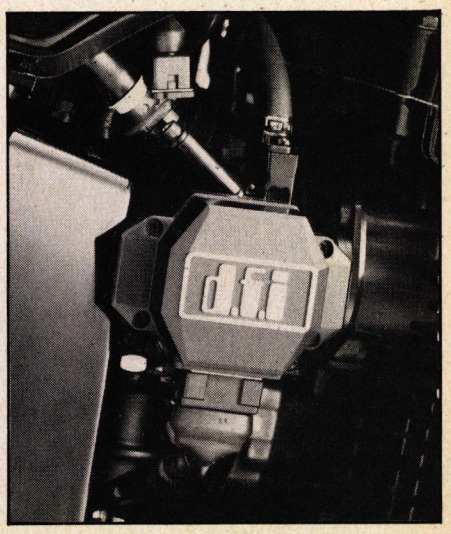
Boost sensor (far left) in plenum chamber replaces altitude sensor in DFI microcomputer

Vacant area in computer box (right) shows where altitude sensor used to live.



Hydraulically actuated anti-dive system

It didn't work on the GPz750, either.



Throttle sensor sends data to microcomputer

For accurate, instantaneous response.

Continued

TURBO

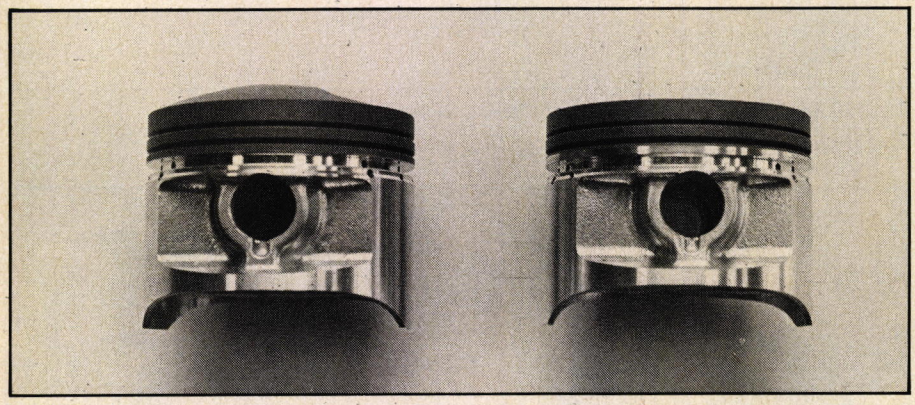
lever can cause the anti-dive valves to unseat—with a resultant front-end dive.

Those anti-dive units bolt to a fork that's been subtly altered from '83 GPz specs to suit the 750 Turbo's special needs, caused by the Hitachi turbocharger's location in front of the engine. As a result of the forward-mounted turbocharger, travel has been reduced 20mm to keep the front wheel from smacking into the turbo when the fork is at full compression. Shorter wheel-travel and the Turbo's added weight required stiffer fork action, too, so spring preload was increased 5mm. Rebound damping and spring rates are the same as the '83 GPz750's, though.

Recalibrating the Uni-Trak rear suspension for the 750 Turbo took a little more work. The standard GPz750's steel Uni-Trak links have been replaced by forged alloy pieces that provide a different leverage ratio yielding a more progressive rear wheel rate. And while both 750s use the same basic shock body, the Turbo's shock has a stiffer spring with less preload, a 5mm-shorter stroke and a stiffer No. 4 rebound damping setting; settings 1 through 3 correspond to the GPz750's 2-through-4 adjustments.

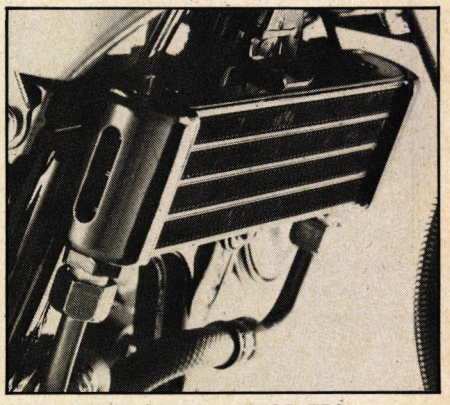
Despite those changes, the 750 Turbo's suspension performs much the same as the unpressurized GPz750's. The fork provides a firm, yet comfortable ride at the stock air-pressure setting, with no loss of stability during spirited cornering. But while the shock's No. 2 rebound damping setting gives the best ride quality at moderate speeds, picking up the pace uncovers a mild rear-end wobble. The No. 3 setting cures the wiggle, but heavy riders or full-berserk cornering speeds might require the No. 4 setting.

That's not at all unlikely, since the 750 Turbo's racy ergonomics encourage fast riding. When you aren't out terrorizing the backroads, though, the Turbo is a bit more accommodating than the '83 GPz750 because of a 10mm-lower seat



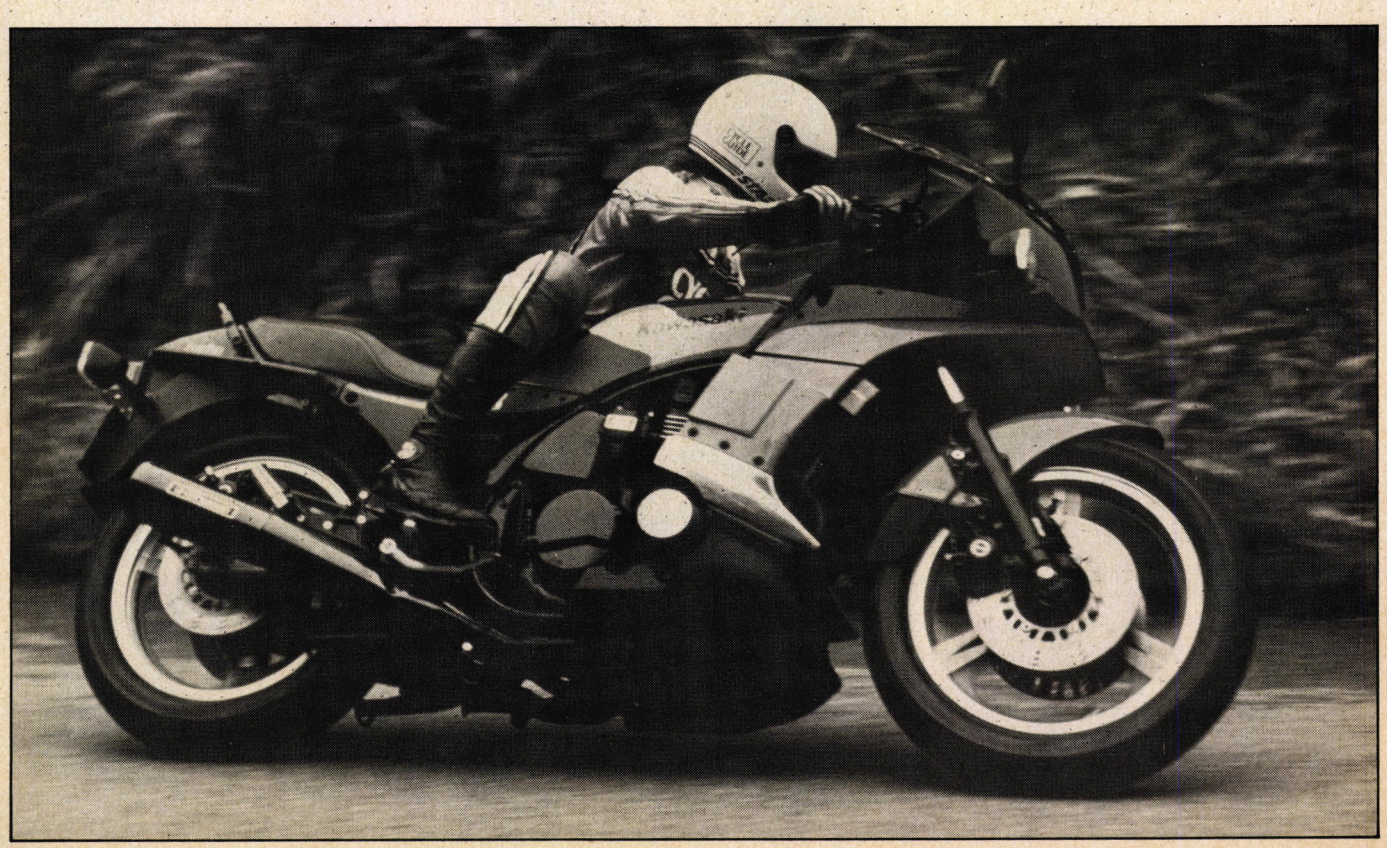
Use of flat-top pistons helps lower compression ratio from 9.5:1 to 7.8:1

A standard operating procedure for turbo-tuning.



Oil radiator is leftover from GPz750

And cools the Turbo's lifeblood.



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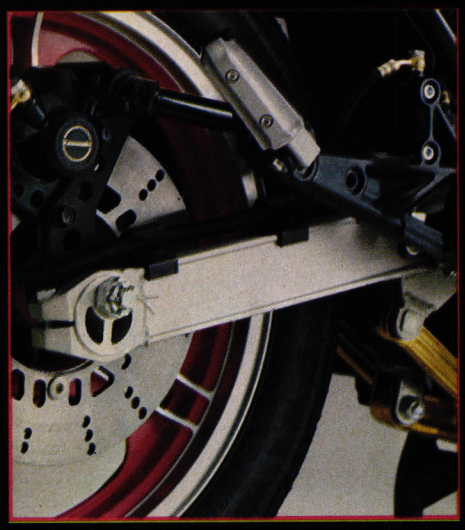
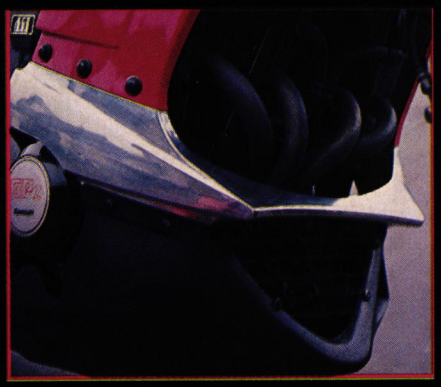
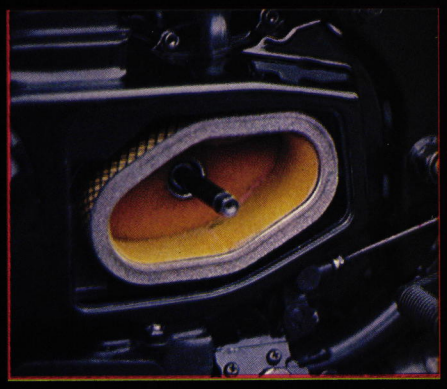






Kawasaki's Turbo makes extensive use of the GPz750, with changes ranging from the subtle, such as a revised rear suspension and the addition of a boost gauge, to the obvious, like the aluminum and plastic fairing pieces and relocated air filter.

1983 YASUHIRO ISHIKAWA

TURBO

height, which places the Turbo pilot slightly more upright, with less weight on his wrists and hands. Production-model Turbos will have 50mm-taller handlebars which will help even more, and should broaden the bike's appeal without reducing its high, sporting profile.

But even if the handlebars are changed before the GPz Turbo goes into production, there are a few other details to sort out, as well. The engine, for instance, might be rubber-mounted in the production bike, although the Turbo we rode used solid mounts that transferred only minimal vibration to the rider. Dunlop tires might replace the Michelins originally chosen for the Turbo, as well, because despite Kawasaki's claim that the French tires best complement the Turbo's chassis, the Dunlops are slightly stickier, and the rear tire's profile would be taller, which would also help quicken the steering.

Those few changes are minor, though, and even if they are made, the performance difference between the production Turbo and the prototype we rode will be small. But one thing that should *never* be changed, for any reason whatsoever, is the Turbozee's staggering power, the ability to accelerate harder than any other production bike. And as long as that incredible power isn't meddled with or moderated, the GPz Turbo will do what no other boostbike has yet done: cement that elemental link between turbocharging and horsepower.

And with that connection firmly made, Kawasaki's GPz750 Turbo stands revealed as more than a thrilling, fiercely capable sportbike. It is also a clear step closer to fulfilling that original turbocharged promise. ●

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

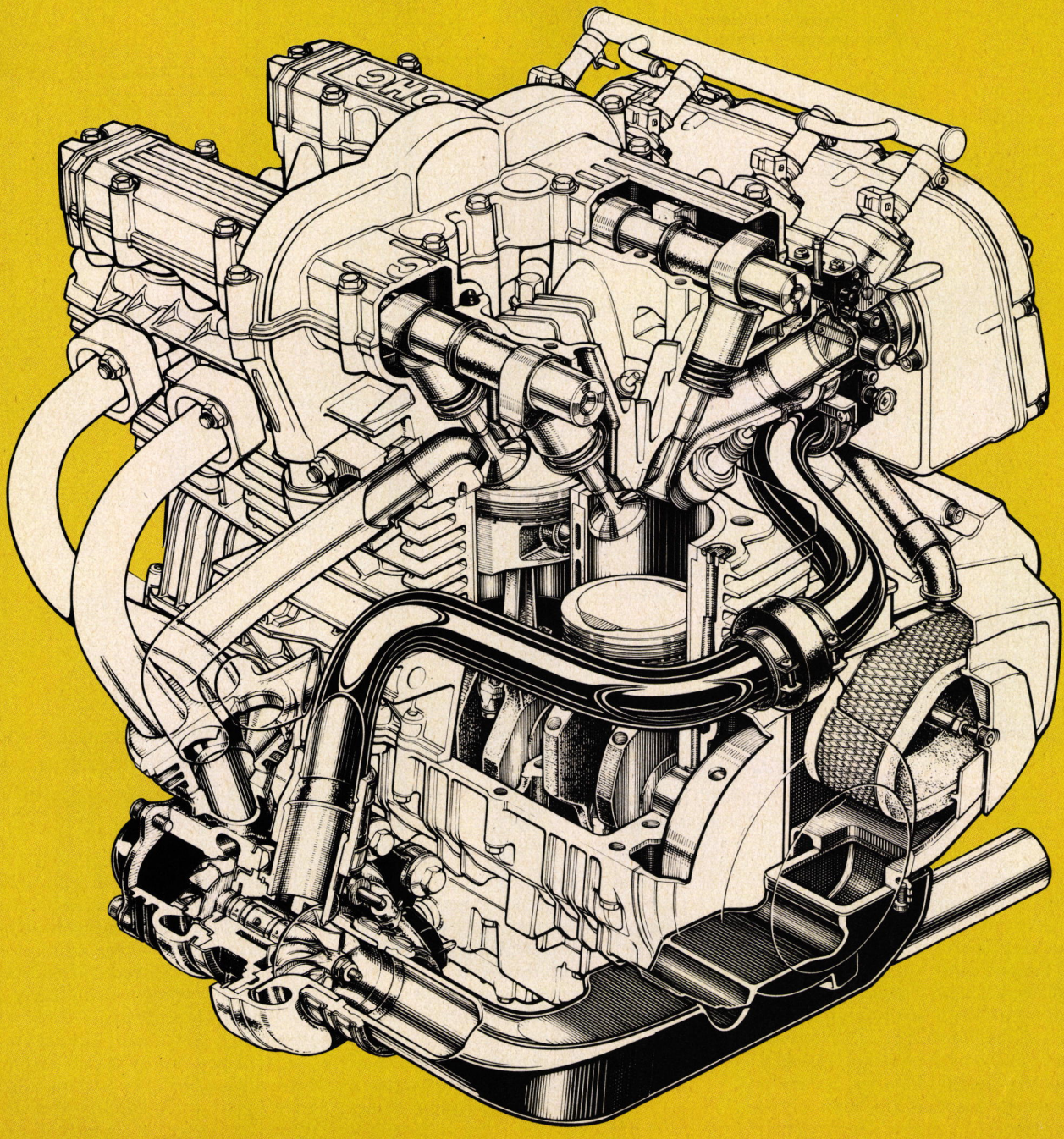
Make and Model	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs.	Stopping Distance From 60 mph,ft.
Kawasaki GPz750 Turbo—'84	11.22/123.5	146	514	NA
Honda CX650 Turbo—'83	12.09/111.7	137	538	124
Suzuki XN85 Turbo—'83	12.38/107.1	132	521	120
Yamaha XJ650L Turbo—'83	13.06/103.3	126	543	126
Kawasaki GPz750—'83	12.16/109.2	134	498	136
Yamaha XJ650L Turbo—'82	12.61/104.6	126	541	145

Turbo By Kawasaki: Giving The GPz A Boost

• If "revolutionary" is a fitting description of the GPz Turbo's engine performance, "evolutionary" best describes the hardware responsible for it. Because mechanically as well as visually, Kawasaki's Turbo more closely resembles the normally aspirated model from which it is derived than do any of the competition's turbocharged motorcycles. And that, along with its phenomenal acceleration and straightforward turbocharging system, just might give the Kawasaki the highest degree of consumer appeal of any turbobike on the market.

Much of the GPz Turbo's attractiveness is in its relative simplicity, exemplified in the mounting of its Hitachi HT-10B turbocharger at the very front of the engine, just below crankshaft level. Short header pipes plumb the exhaust ports to the turbo's 47mm turbine wheel, after which the gases are routed into a conventional two-muffler exhaust system. Intake air, meanwhile, is drawn in through an oiled-foam filter element housed on the left side of the engine, just outboard of the countershaft sprocket, then into the turbo's 50mm compressor wheel through a cast-aluminum duct beneath the alternator cover. Finally, a large-diameter tube that passes around the left end of the cylinder block connects the compressor to a plenum chamber behind the digital fuel injection (DFI) system's 30mm throttle bodies.

According to Kawasaki, this turbo location offers numerous performance pluses with no apparent minuses. Placing the turbocharger as close as possible



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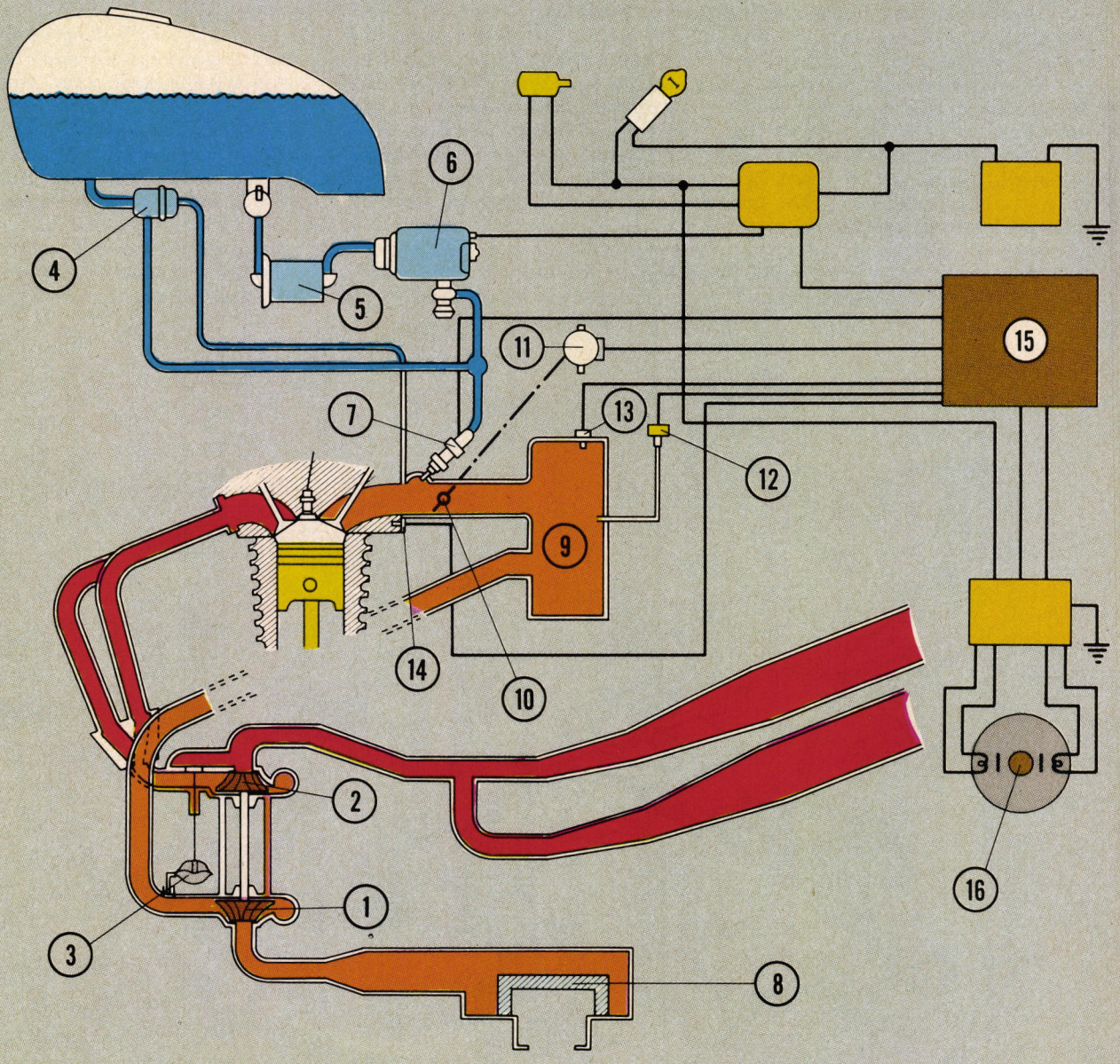
TURBO



1. Compressor wheel
2. Turbine wheel
3. Wastegate
4. Fuel-pressure regulator
5. Fuel filter
6. Fuel pump
7. Injector
8. Air cleaner
9. Plenum chamber
10. Throttle valve
11. Throttle sensor
12. Boost sensor
13. Air-temperature sensor
14. Engine-temperature sensor
15. D.F.I. microcomputer
16. Ignition rotor

to the exhaust valves minimizes exhaust-heat energy-loss through the header pipes; and having the turbo nearer its source of propulsion allows it to respond more quickly to changes in exhaust-gas flow. The net result is that turbo lag—the delay between the opening of the throttle and the arrival of boost in the intake manifold—is significantly reduced. Moreover, no separate intake bypass (like the reed-valve arrangements in Suzuki's and Yamaha's systems) is needed to bolster off-boost performance, since the large volume of available air between the intake valves and the turbocharger has a favorable effect on low-rpm response. Honda fans will quickly point out that the turbocharger on the CX650 Turbo also sits close to the exhaust valves (Suzuki's turbo is behind the cylinders, and Yamaha's is behind the entire engine); but the Kawasaki's turbo is mounted significantly lower in the chassis—so much so, in fact, that it actually helps lower the bike's center of gravity while the Honda's is positioned high enough to *raise* it.

That same sort of engineering logic is evident inside the Turbo's engine, where relatively few components differ from the normally aspirated GPz750 motor on which it's based. The structural upgradings, all of which are in the drivetrain, include: one more clutch plate and a reinforced clutch hub; a larger-diameter transmission mainshaft;

bigger transmission bearings; a sharper undercut on the gear dogs for more secure engagement; a spring-type damper in the pre-transmission jackshaft rather than rubber; and a higher-quality primary-drive chain.

Aside from a higher-output alternator (280 watts vs. 240), all other differences between the blown and unblown GPz750 engines are typical turbo detuning measures. Camshaft lift is 1mm lower, and the open duration of the valves is 32 degrees shorter on intake and 26 degrees shorter on exhaust. Flat-top pistons and a reshaped combustion chamber drop the compression ratio from 9.5:1 to 7.8:1, while the hand-finished portwork found in the standard GPz750 engine has been omitted in the turbomotor, since boost pressure more than compensates for any small obstructions in the ports. And to take better advantage of the massive power that boost provides, the primary drive, final drive and gearbox (except for third gear) all have new ratios that yield considerably taller overall gearing.

Further underlining the Turbo's low level of intricacy is the absence of special devices for preventing detonation (Yamaha's turbobike uses a knock-sensor; the Honda and Suzuki rely on elaborate computer-controlled ignition systems). The Kawasaki achieves anti-knock status simply by shortening the overall ignition advance (the Turbo's maximum advance is 30 degrees at 3300 rpm, while the GPz750's is 44 degrees at 3600 rpm) and by eliminating the squish band in each combustion chamber.

It all sounds too simple to work, but rest assured that it does. On the other hand, any motorcycle equipped with electronic fuel injection can't be called *simple*. But in this particular case, the use of fuel injection is not only justified, it's practically mandatory. The advantages of fuel injection on a turbobike far outweigh any disadvantages, since an injection system can respond much more accurately and quickly than carburetors to the increased fuel-metering demands of a turboed engine. So with all of Kawasaki's fuel-injection expertise (dating back to the 1980 KZ1000 LTD Classic, motorcycling's first fuel-injected production bike), it would have been unwise *not* to use injection on this machine.

It's not surprising, then, that the Turbo's DFI is very similar to the one used on the '82 and '83 GPz1100. There are significant differences, though, such as an improved heat sensor that can measure the higher intake-air temperatures caused by turbocharging, plus the addition of a boost sensor in the plenum chamber. And since that boost sensor also detects variations in intake pressure caused by altitude changes, it replaces the separate altitude sensor that was incorporated into the GPz1100's main DFI computer.

Another important change is that the 750 Turbo's injectors each have a 30 percent larger orifice than the 1100's but only fire once every 720 crankshaft degrees (two engine revolutions) instead of every 360 degrees. The reason is simple: On the 750, the injection pulse at or near idle rpm would have been too tiny to accurately control with the smaller injectors, yet the fuel requirements at peak rpm on both engines are about the same (both generate approximately the same amount of horsepower); consequently, injection frequency was halved to satisfy low-rpm requirements and injector size was upped to handle high-rpm volume.

That longer interval between injections, however, could have caused some hesitation in engine response when the throttle was snapped open at lower rpm. So Kawasaki incorporated what it calls a "one-shot" injection pulse, which is not unlike the squirt of fuel delivered by the accelerator pump on certain carburetors. On the Turbo's DFI, though, the squirt is triggered electronically instead of mechanically. The computer, using the data sent it by the throttle-position sensor, reacts the instant the throttle is opened and signals all four injectors to fire just one time. The duration of that single pulse is automatically varied according to the amount and speed of throttle movement, as well as where the throttle was positioned when that movement began.

The wonders of computerized fuel delivery don't stop there. The computer automatically shuts down the injectors should the engine attempt to exceed 11,500 rpm or if the turbocharger wastegate (normally set to limit boost to 10.8 psi) malfunctions and allows boost pressure to exceed 12.5 psi. The injectors stay off, too, until the rpm or boost drops below those limits. And should any one of seven vital functions in the DFI fail (the four sensors, the ignition pulser, the starter switch or the computer itself), the system can diagnose its own problems. A small light built into the computer box flashes when one of those functions goes awry, and its rate of flashing varies according to the particular function at fault.

That feature alone should make Kawasaki's Turbo much less mechanically intimidating to prospective buyers. The bike looks, feels and, in fact, *is* a lot like the standard-issue GPz750. It is, at least, until you dial open the throttle and dip into the boost. When that happens, the GPz Turbo isn't much like *anything* else. *—Paul Dean*

Ride Review

• Five years ago I bought what could have turned into a bill of goods. I accepted the "promise of turbocharging"; that turbocharging could painlessly endow a smaller, lighter motorcycle with the power of a larger-displacement bike.

Then I waited for production turbos to bear out that promise. When they arrived, they *were* fast—on boost. But they were also fat, weighing 70 pounds or so more than their normally aspirated counterparts. And off-boost, they ranged from moderately sluggish to painfully so. As a result, turbocharged bikes got labeled "different," machines that could be evaluated only on their own, vaguely mystic, scale.

That's all passed into history. The GPz750 Turbo performs without the aid of any mumbo jumbo. Nothing about it is vague or mystical—or even subtle. It will accelerate hard enough to provide a permanent case of writer's cramp in your ticket-signing hand. It's no lame duck off-boost, either. In fact, if the production GPz750 Turbos are anything like the final prototype we rode, they will be lighter, faster and quicker than any production Turbo to date. Like I said, five years ago I bought that bill of goods. And five years later, Kawasaki delivered.

—Larry Works

• Some things are immutable. Birds have to fly. Fish gotta swim. And one way or another, Kawasaki simply is compelled to build the meanest, fastest motorcycles on this planet. It's always been that way, and until some permutation of nature changes the order of things, it'll probably stay that way.

So I'm not surprised that even with its late entry into the pressurebike sweepstakes, Kawasaki has Dopplered right past the competition by building an out-and-out turbo hot rod. Honda's CX Turbo is fast, as well, but it's still not in the same league with the Kawasaki. Nor is Suzuki's XN85, whose main attraction is found in the subtleties of its quick handling. But the Kawasaki is about as subtle as a whack across the forehead with a two-by-four. Its message is horsepower, pure and simple, the kind of raucous, eyeball-flattening power that launches you down the road like you've been let fly from God's own slingshot.

If you don't understand all of this, if somehow you have never experienced the awe and elation that only accompanies truly fierce acceleration, you've obviously been unjustly deprived of one of life's great moments. But fret not; one ride on the Kawasaki Turbo can heal any damage that's been done.

—Paul Dean

Continued

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Kawasaki GPz750 Turbo — street

IMPORTER: Kawasaki Motors Corp., 2009 East Edinger Avenue, Santa Ana, California 92711

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: N/A

ENGINE

Type . . . . . turbocharged four-stroke transverse vertical four
Valve arrangement . . . . . double overhead camshafts
Bore and stroke . . . . . 66.0mm x 54.0mm
Displacement 739.0cc
Compression ratio 7.8:1
Engine redline . . . . . 9500 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . Nippondenso electronic fuel injection, four 30mm throttle bodies
Air filter . . . . . washable oiled foam element
Lubrication . . . . . wet sump
Starting system . . . . . electric only
Ignition . . . . . transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . . . 12-volt; 280-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 14-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate
Crankshaft-to-jackshaft drive . . . . . inverted-tooth chain; 1.000:1 ratio
Jackshaft-to-transmission drive . . . . . straight-cut gears; 1.935:1 ratio
Final drive . . . . . #630 O-ring chain (3/4-in. pitch, 3/8-in. width); 3.067:1 (46/14) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.283	13.567	5.69
II	1.647	9.776	7.89
III	1.273	7.554	10.22
IV	1.045	6.205	12.44
V	0.833	4.946	15.60

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . Kayaba air-spring, 37mm stanchion tube diameter, brake-actuated hydraulic anti-dive/5.1 in (130mm)
Rear . . . . . single Kayaba air-spring shock, 4-position adjustable rebound damping/4.1 in. (105mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 11.0-in (280mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . single-action hydraulic caliper, 10.6-in. (270mm) effective disc diameter

TIRES

Front . . . . . 110/90V18 Michelin A48 tubeless
Rear . . . . . 130/80V18 Michelin M48 tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight . . . . . 514 lbs. (233.0kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . 48.4% front, 51.6% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . . N/A
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . N/A
Wheelbase . . . . . 58.7 in. (1490mm)
Seat height . . . . . 30.7 in. (780mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 25.8 in. (655mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 14.5 in. (367mm)
Ground clearance . . . . 6.1 in. (155mm), at exhaust system
Steering head angle . . . . . 28.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 4.61 in. (117mm)
Frame . . . . . tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity . . . . . 3.7 qt. (3.5/)
Fuel tank . . . . . steel, 4.8 gal. (18.0/), including 1.3 gal. (5.1/) reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, voltmeter, LCD boost gauge, LCD fuel gauge, bulb/LCD warning system

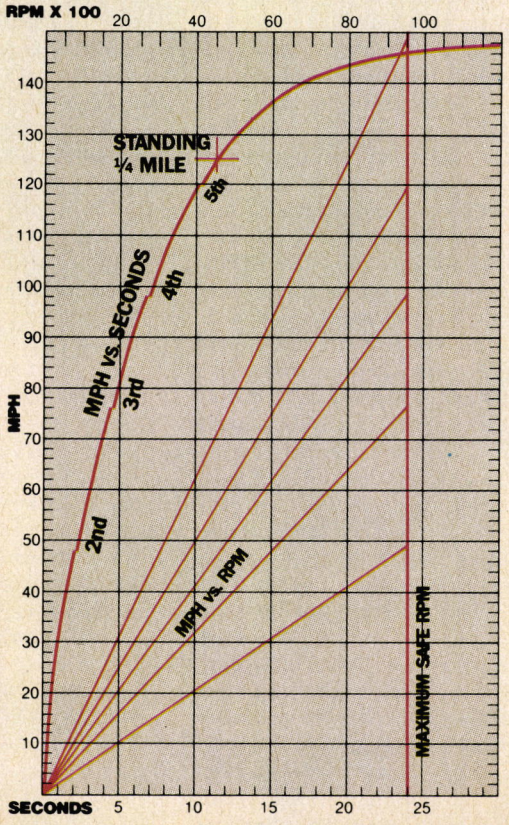
PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . N/A
Average fuel consumption . . . . . N/A
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . N/A
Cruising range, reserve only . . . . . N/A
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated . . . . . N/A
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated . . . . . N/A
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 11.225 sec., 123.53 mph (199 km/h)*
Top speed (observed) . . . . . 146 mph (235 km/h)*
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . N/A
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . . . N/A

WARRANTY: 12 months unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLOR: black-and-red only

All specifications are the manufacturer's claims for a pre-production proto- type motorcycle.
***Performance data compiled by CYCLE GUIDE Magazine's test riders.**



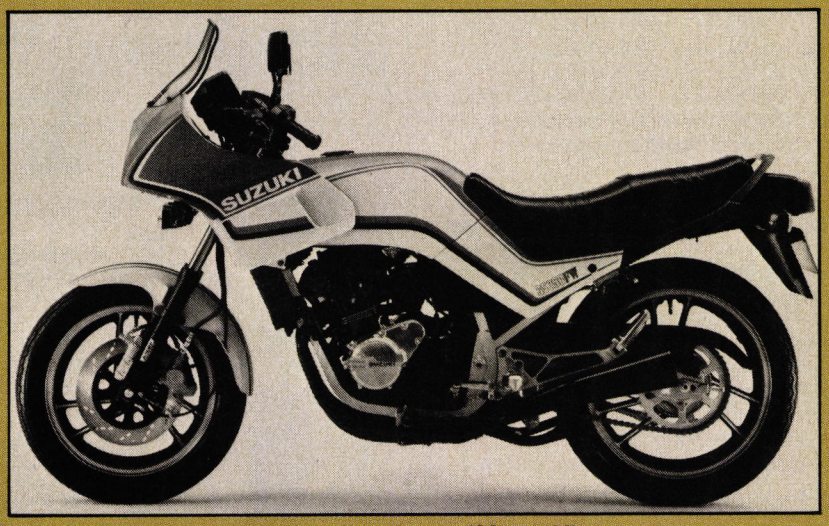
GUIDE LINES

Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

BY JOE KRESS

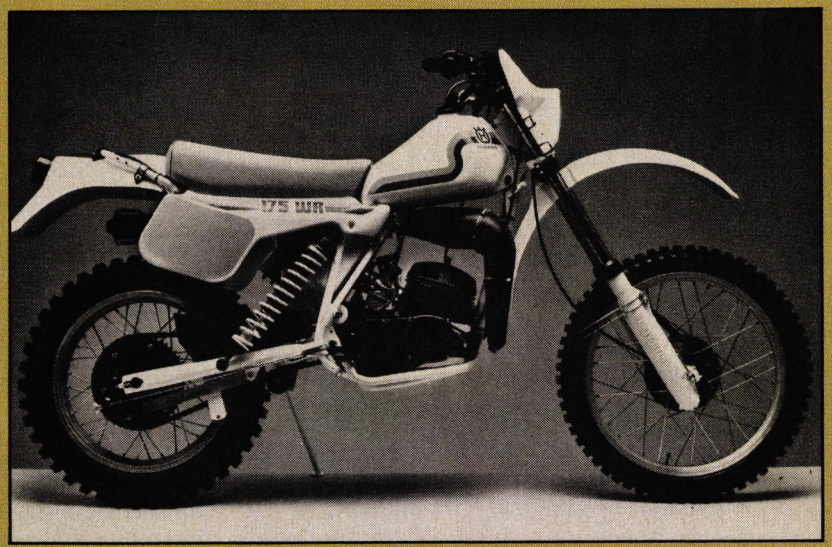
COMING SOON

- And you thought you'd seen all of Suzuki's sportbikes for '83. Well think again, because the GS250FW, the quarter-liter, four-stroke we first heard about last year, has just surfaced. This liquid-cooled, 11,000-rpm screamer comes with all of Suzuki's current sportbike features but scaled down to 250-class dimensions. Included are the square-section-tube frame, the 16-inch front wheel, anti-dive and Suzuki's Full Floater rear suspension, complete with the hydraulic preload adjustment.
- Husqvarna, meanwhile, has just introduced a few new bikes of its own. These two mid-year models, the 175XC and 175WR, are the first 175s from Husqvarna since 1976. The XC is designed for desert racing and hare scrambles, and is fitted with new, double-leading-shoe front brakes, Husqvarna's trademark twin-shock suspension and a Forestry Service-approved spark arrestor. Husky also offers an optional speedometer kit for the XC that could make the bike useful for high-speed enduros, too.
- But the 175WR Husky doesn't need any options to get enduro-ready; they all come standard. Besides its full enduro lighting system and gas-filled Betor rear shocks, the WR has a lower seat height and less suspension travel than the XC to make it easier to handle on tight enduro trails. But both these new Huskys come with caseguards to protect the engine, and both are finished in 1983 Husky white, complete with the new graphics.
- For work on really tricky trails, Montesa's new Cota 242 could be just the machine. With its Comec fork, Betor shocks and extensive use of lightweight alloy, the Cota 242 offers the promise of turning the roughest trials section into easy work. The newest Cota has a 238cc, Amal-carbureted engine that's fired by a Motoplat magneto. And just in case a section proves tougher than anticipated, Montesa claims the bike's one-piece plastic bodywork is unbreakable.
- Now this machine will get around a track a little faster than that Montesa; it's Honda's new Open-class MXer. But don't run down to the local Honda shop trying to buy one of these liquid-cooled racers, because there won't be any there. This is the factory's 1983 works bike. But works-bike features of one year have a way of becoming production-bike features for the next, so, in addition to the liquid-cooling, you might want to start thinking about 1984 motocrossers with hydraulic clutches and disc brakes front and rear.
- But if knobby tires don't figure into your kind of racing, maybe these roadracers will be more to your liking. Hejira Racing Development, of Great Britain, has just introduced two new models for '83; one is powered by a Rotax four-stroke single, the other uses a Ducati 600cc Pantah engine. Both racers are built around HRD-designed monoshock frames, and both use Marzocchi forks and Brembo brakes.
- And if knobbies aren't your kind of tire, maybe radials are. Pirelli's much-talked-about motorcycle radial, the MP7, could be in



Suzuki hasn't forgotten the quarter-liter class for '83 sportbikes

The GS250FW has everything you'd expect—only smaller.



Newest WR is the first 175cc machine from Husky since 1976

And it comes enduro-ready in Swedish-standard.

Continued

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Kawasaki KZ/GPZ 750/810cc	$435.00
Kawasaki 900/1015cc	$435.00
Kawasaki 1000/1075cc	$435.00
Kawasaki GPZ 1100/1170cc	$525.00
Suzuki 750/844cc 2-Valve model	$435.00
Suzuki 1000/1100cc 2-Valve model	$435.00
Suzuki 1100/1168cc	$535.00

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KZ650/720cc	$205	750/915cc	$295
GPz750/810cc	$205	900/985cc	$229
900/1015cc	$205	900/1063cc	$325
1000/1075cc	$205	**Suzuki**	
1000/1105cc	$299	GS550/630cc	$205
1000/1260cc	$320	GS650/740cc	$205
GPz1100/1260cc	$320	GS750/844cc	$205
Yamaha		GS1000/1100cc	$205
550/585cc	$205	GS1100/1258cc	$320
650/717cc	$205		
750/849cc	$205	MANY MORE	
1100/1196cc	$205		

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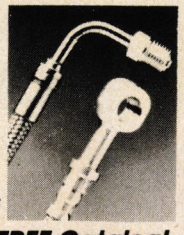

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Disc rear	$27.95

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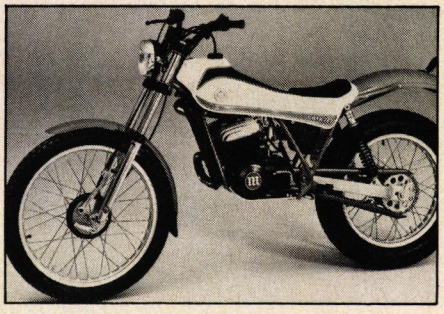
production soon. Two versions of the new-design tire have been seen: a racing slick and a treaded road tire. So far, the only MP7s seen have been mounted on the rear wheels of high-performance bikes, where the added traction of a radial could be a real benefit.

• But while the traction of Pirelli's MP7 could prove useful to a racer, the run-flat tire Dunlop has been working on could be just as beneficial for a touring rider. Dunlop has developed this run-flat tire especially for Harley-Davidson, using existing automotive-tire technology in its construction.

• And that mpg-increasing capability of Pirelli's new radial, or maybe the run-flat attributes of the new Dunlop, might be what it takes to win Craig Vetter's 1983 Fuel Economy Run. But if you have your sights on Charly Perethian's '82-winning 282-mpg figure, you'd better act fast; this year's Economy Run is scheduled for July 16 and 17, once again held in conjunction with the Laguna Seca roadrace. Official rules for this year's event are available by writing Vetter Design Works, 1 Alta Mira Lane, San Luis Obispo, California 93401.

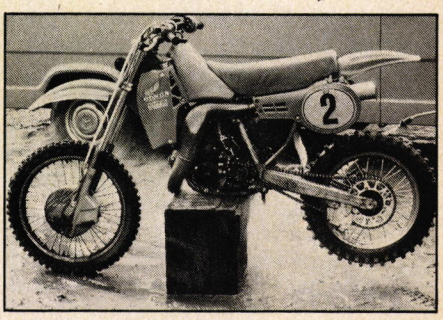
Husqvarna's high-stepping 175XC is built with one thing in mind

High-speed work in the desert.



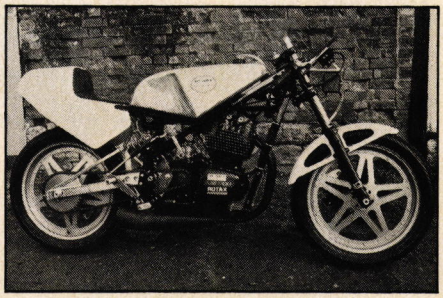
Montesa's newest trials bike

It'll have you climbing the walls.



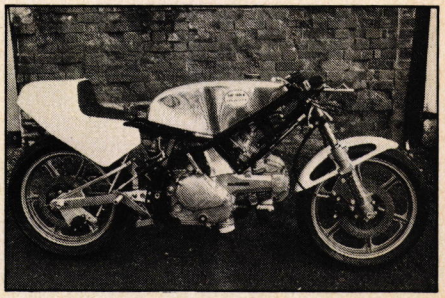
Honda's Open-class works bike

Sorting out '84's production features?



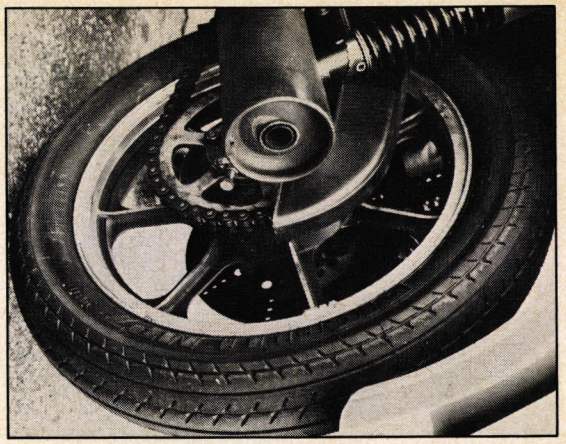
Hejira Racing's Rotax-powered bike

Just introduced for the '83 season.



HRD's 600cc Ducati-powered racer

Italian engine in an English frame.



Pirelli MP7 radial comes treaded or slick

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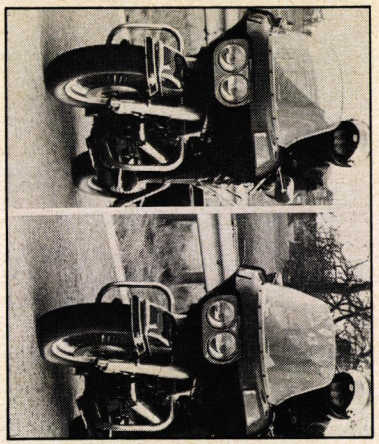

Applied automotive technology

Dunlop's run-flat motorcycle tire.

HARD CASH

• Yamaha Motor Corporation U.S.A. is now the only Japanese motorcycle importer offering its customers retail financing. Ford Motor Credit Company, in conjunction with Yamaha, will provide the financing for new bikes sold by franchised Yamaha dealers. James W. Ford, chairman of Ford Credit, said that his company would establish the Motorcycle Retail Finance Plan, which allows more than 1600 U.S. Yamaha dealers to participate. The financing is available on new Yamahas with engine displacements 400cc or larger and is effective immediately.

• Kawasaki Motors Corp. doesn't yet have such a purchase plan in this country. In Canada, however, a few Kawasaki dealers have set up alternate plans of their own, in an effort to move motorcycles through their showrooms. HotCycle, of Toronto, is one such dealership, and its enticement to buyers is a leasing program. Most Kawasaki models are offered under HotCycle's leasing plan, which prices a GPz1100 at $148 a month.

• In Oregon, a former motorcycle dealer who felt he had been wronged by the system has

Continued

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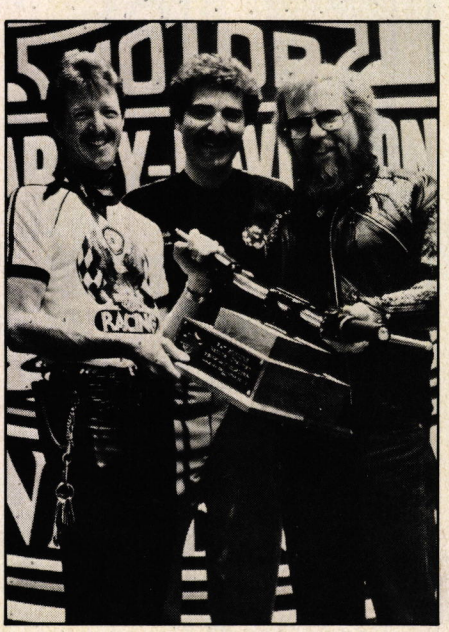
come out a winner in the end. The courts in that state recently ordered Kawasaki Motors Corp. to pay $600,000 to the dealer, after they ruled that Kawasaki had violated state antitrust laws. KMC was found guilty of supplying product to competing dealers at lower prices.

• In an attempt to prevent that kind of discrimination, franchised motorcycle dealers across the U.S. have just formed the Motorcycle Retailers Of America. This organization is a national lobbying group that will endeavor to bring dealers together, allowing them, as a group, to negotiate with their respective manufacturers for more favorable business terms.

• But while Kawasaki was paying out money, the Muscular Dystrophy Association has been taking it in. Over the past three years, nearly $750,000 has been generated for that charity by the Harley-Davidson-organized Bikers Fight Against MD. And since 1980, Pat Simmons, one of the founding members of the Doobie Brothers rock group, has been actively involved raising funds by participating in bike shows, poker runs, field meets or anywhere else his services might be useful. So for 1983, Simmons will serve as National Chairman of the Bikers Fight Against Muscular Dystrophy.



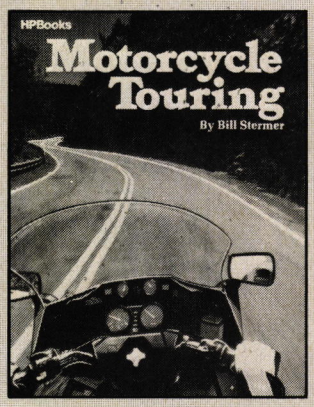
Chairman of the Bikers Fight Against MD

Pat Simmons of the Doobie Brothers.

• The AMA's Battle of the Twins roadrace series has really caught on in popularity. So much so, in fact, that Burmah-Castrol Inc., which already had a contingency award fund set up for the series, recently upped that fund's dollar pay-out to BOTT racers using Castrol lubricants. Now, the twin-cylinder-mounted GP-class champion will receive $1000 of Castrol's money for his effort. Series winners in the three other BOTT classes can pick up $250 each from Castrol.

• And while Moto Guzzis might not be the best bet to win any of that money, they are twins, and therefore eligible. That Italian

Book Review



MOTORCYCLE TOURING
By Bill Stermer
142 pages, $7.95
H.P. Books
P.O. Box 5367
Tucson, Arizona 85703

• Riders new to the delights—and demands—of touring will find "Motorcycle Touring" a helpful book. It's a how-to text, surveying the types of touring motorcycles and the host of touring accessories available. In a basic format aimed at the uninitiated tourer, Stermer covers the essentials of clothing, maintenance and preparation. This step-by-step book is not, however, an instruction manual on how to ride, nor is it a guide to scenic routes, campgrounds or Great Beaneries. What Stermer presents is "a concise overview of the mind, heart and equipment of touring." And as much as any overview can be concise, this one is.

Included is a comprehensive survey of the gear and goodies of touring, the fairings, luggage and clothes. Accessories like driving lights, cruise controls and radar detectors—most of the equipment available to increase a bike's touring quotient—also are covered.

The chapters on motorcycle maintenance and packing for a trip will be useful to the novice tourer looking for advice. Organized touring, both in this country and abroad, is covered briefly. There also is a chart of international road signs and a partial listing of touring organizations.

Stermer writes: "There are few frontiers left for the person who wants to pit himself against adversity, to find where he stands when he stands alone. Some of us choose touring to test our resourcefulness and to pit ourselves against *something*."

That seems to be overstating the case. I tend to think we run out of frontiers only when we run out of imagination. And "Motorcycle Touring" will fuel the imagination of neophyte tourers, while passing along tips that come only from experience. Ultimately, it's those tips that prove most worthwhile. —*T.J. Rafferty*

marque now has a new distributor in this country, too. Benelli North America, of Baltimore, Maryland, has taken over from Berliner's Premier Motor Division as the U.S. importer of Moto Guzzi.

FEDERAL CASES

• Rep. Robert S. Walker, R-Penn., has, once again, introduced anti-motorcycle legislation in Congress. Walker's House Concurrent Resolution 82, like his Resolution 220 of 1979, calls for the formation of a presidential strike force to investigate and prosecute outlaw motorcycle gangs. Walker wants a federal strike force established in every U.S. judicial district. But, once again, Walker's proposal makes no differentiation between what he terms outlaw gangs and any other group of motorcycle riders.

• Fortunately, not all federal legislation is as close-minded as the proposals of congressman Walker. SB271, for instance, which just passed both House and Senate approval, would open up a significant portion of the National Trails System to dirtbikes. This bill, which has been in the legislative system for four years, now awaits either President Reagan's ratification signature or his veto.

• The Motorcycle Safety Foundation has chosen New Mexico as the recipient of two separate awards for that state's contributions toward motorcycle safety in 1982. The State Recognition Award was given to New Mexico for advances made in its rider education programs, which include mobile training units traveling throughout the state. New Mexico's second MSF award came for the state's excellence in Public Information. New Mexico law requires motorcycle riders under the age of 18 to complete a rider education class and, since no public school in the state offered such a program, the state implemented one aimed at high-school students 13 through 17 years old.

RUMORS

• By now it's no secret that the new 750cc Superbike formula hasn't been kind to Kawasaki, last year's winner. Compared to Honda's Interceptors, the green, GPz750-based Kawasakis are noticeably down on power. Which means their riders are noticeably lower on the winner's podium, too, a place the Green Team isn't used to staying. But if our trackwise insiders have this story straight, that's a situation that soon could change. At a recent West Coast Superbike race, there was talk in the pits of a new Kawasaki racer—for *this* season. And here's where it gets interesting, because word has it this new racer will be liquid-cooled.

• And that Kawasaki story comes into sharper focus when viewed through this overheard snippet of information. A usually reliable source tells us that the company that for so long has stuck with its eight-valve, inline-four has seriously been working on vee-configuration engines. And this source goes on to say that he's been told—by those who should know—that, "Kawasaki doesn't like twins." So what does that mean to you?

• Honda's MVX250F, that three-cylinder, two-stroke street rocket introduced just a few months ago, already has made its mark on the ranks of the RD and RZ Yamaha loyalists. But now we're hearing that having the fastest, best-handling 250cc streetbike isn't enough for Honda and there is more to come in this new, MVX series. Talk in Japan has it that a 400cc version is ready to be announced any day, with an MVX500F following close on its heels. The closest we'll ever get to any of that two-stroke smoke, though, would be Canada.

• Finally, if you think Kawasaki's Turbo is the only production boostbike in the news, think again. From what we've been hearing, there's another turbobike on the horizon, and it's American. If this story proves true, Harley-Davidson officials were serious when they hinted about changing H-D's image a little. Performance is back in vogue in Milwaukee, and the XR1000 could be just the beginning. Our man in the Midwest says Harley purchasing agents recently contracted for a sizeable shipment of turbo kits from a prominent aftermarket supplier. And you thought a Harley's carburetor and air filter got in the way of your leg. Just wait.

AFTER THE FACT

• Last month we evaluated Continental's SuperTwin tire set, the new high-performance companions to the venerable ContiTwins. That test (After The Fact, June '83) found the new SuperTwins to be more than equal to the job of transmitting literbike power to the pavement, but now Continental has announced another update: the availability of an R compound for the new SuperTwins. This super-sticky tread won't last as long as the rubber used in the standard SuperTwins, but it should make the tires even better for high-performance road use. The R-compound Super Twins have the letters RC on their sidewalls, and they'll cost slightly more than the suggested list prices of the standard versions.

APART FROM THE CROWD

• Helmet-law protests aren't something uniquely American; England has a similiar mandate that's just as unpopular. But in England the protests take on a decidedly, well, British flair, straight out of Monty Python. Consider the case of Brian Nicholas, a man who rides around with his head wrapped in a turban. Nicholas takes advantage of a quirk in British law that exempts Hindus from hav-

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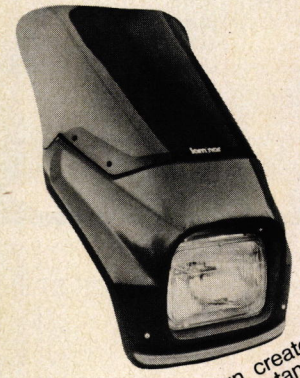

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MOVIE REVIEW:

ROAD SHOW '83

Produced and Directed by Peter Starr

• Where can you go to see motorcycle movies this year? The answer might be up to your Honda dealer.

"Road Show '83" is primarily a joint venture between motomovie-man Peter Starr and American Honda. Highlighted in this two-hour, five-film collection are the exploits of roadracer Freddie Spencer and motocross rider Darrell Shultz.

Roadracing gets the most footage in these films, which provide a good chronicle both of Honda's return to the international pavement wars and the remarkable rise of the Shreveport Streak. Spencer shows as much natural ability talking into cameras and microphones as he demonstrates in the saddle of a Superbike. His fans will appreciate the chance to see him without leathers and helmet, commenting on racing, playing golf or just plain hanging out.

"Road Show '83's" first racing segment features the 1981–'82 Superbike showdown, with a natural emphasis on the fortunes of Team Honda. Spencer explains a bit of what it's like to ride a one-liter, four-stroke racer at Daytona, which does not include, as the film shows, how to *gracefully* catch fire in the pits.

At Loudon there's a thrilling visual lesson from Spencer on drifting a Superbike in the rain, concluding with how to slide out—in great form—when the throttle sticks open. At Seattle, in some of "Road Show's" best-shot and -edited sequences, Spencer and Kawasaki's Eddie Lawson go at it handlebar-to-elbow. This is down-to-the-line roadrace drama at its best.

Then the film returns to Daytona in '82, Superbike's last year as a one-liter formula, where the Team Honda techno-juggernaut owned the winner's circle. With Spencer, Mike Baldwin and Roberto Pietri finishing 1-2-3, the company's official return to roadracing was certified.

With that, "Road Show" turns to motocross, and a look at Darrell Shultz during the '82 Daytona Supercross. This segment is developed in a separate feature, "Against All Odds", which details Shultz's run at the '82 National 500cc Motocross Championship. This is the stuff you don't see on "Wide World of Sports"; training, knee surgery, therapy and more training. The grit.

In addition to some nice motocross imagery, the film touches briefly on the guiding influence of the MX Doctor himself, Roger De Coster. Shultz went on to win the championship, and this film reflects the combination of pain, skill, guts and desire that he put into it.

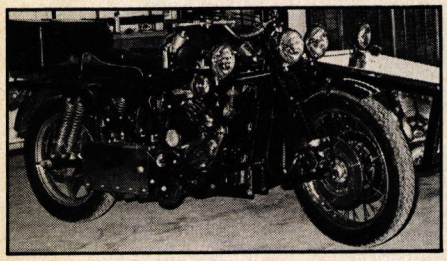
"Road Show" then shifts back to pavement pictorials, with coverage of the '82 Formula One race at Daytona, where Spencer and Baldwin were aboard Honda's new liquid-cooled, 1000cc vee-fours. Kenny Roberts had the new 500cc Yamaha square-four but, true to tradition, it broke early on. This was the race where both Spencer and Baldwin had tire troubles, putting them in second and fourth places, respectively. But Starr captures some stirring, high-speed visuals at Daytona; the sensations of brain-wrinkling velocity on the banking were achieved with a helicopter-mounted camera, including some nice compositions of Spencer, Pietri and Baldwin running in tight formation.

The fifth segment, however, "Evergreen Trailride", made in Washington state for the parks and recreation department, doesn't measure up to the rest of the films. The script is awkward and the acting is amateurish. Despite that, though, the mountain trails and panoramic vistas are terrific; trail riders will want to head for the Northwest immediately.

And motorcycle enthusiasts will want to head for a Honda dealer to see this movie. Peter Starr has been in the motomovie game for more than a decade, and "Road Show '83" has some of his best stuff. And although no specific, single theme is explored in the five films, after watching Spencer and Shultz at work, one message does emerge: *It ain't easy to make it look easy.* —*T.J. Rafferty*

ing to wear an approved helmet. Cited and called into court, Nicholas—in his turban—challenged the judge to come up with a legal definition of a Hindu. The judge, even with the help of Scotland Yard, couldn't do it and had to dismiss the case.

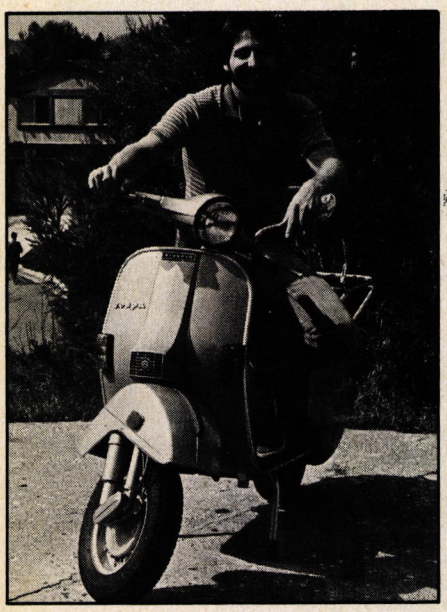
• And while Nicholas didn't wear his turban while riding this bike, he certainly would fit right in with it; it's English, and it's strange. This one-off creation is powered by a four-cylinder Mini-Cooper automobile engine, complete with a four-speed automatic transmission that still has reverse gear. And just to be sure the damping on the bike isn't too light, there are *four* rear shocks, ORV-style. Of course, no machine this elaborate would be complete without a sidecar, so, naturally, there is one—made of polished aluminum panels, if you please. Maybe this bike's owner isn't protesting helmet laws, but he's sure protesting something.



If no one sells it, someone will make it

This rider wanted a bike with reverse.

• Finally, it looks like Bad Brad might be making a comeback. The current 500cc Motocross World Champion, without a ride for '83, has been spotted around his Northern California home sorting out a new machine. And if he successfully fits a long-travel suspension to the P200E Vespa he's been riding, Lackey again could be a force to reckon with in the Open-class wars. Of course, the scooter would need a flame paint-job first. ●



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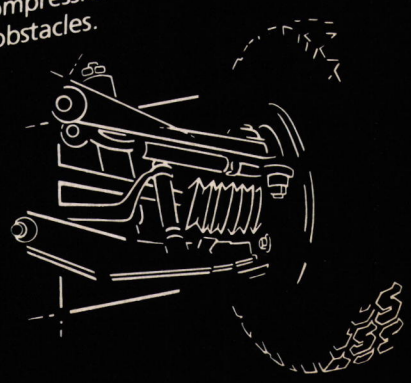

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- Shift from 2WD to 4WD at the flick of a stick. Front hubs lock automatically. Not in Toyota.
- 5-speed overdrive transmission.
- Power steering (with tilt column) standard.

SPECIFICATIONS—King Cab® 4 x 4		EQUIPMENT	
Wheelbase (in.)	110.8	Brakes	power front disc/rear drum
Length (in.)	187.0	Wheels & tires	5.5K15 P215/75R-15 steel-belted radials with outline white letters
Width (in.)	66.3	Front suspension	independent adjustable torsion bars
Height (in.)	67.1	Rear suspension	self-leveling leaf springs
Min. ground clearance (in.)	8.7	Selected options	air conditioning; light bar; winch; grille guard
Max GVWR (lbs.)	4660		
Payload (lbs.)	1460		
Fuel capacity (gal.)	15.9		
Bed length (in.)	73.4		
Bed width (in.)	56.9		
Bed depth (in.)	15.6		

DOUBLE-WALL CONSTRUCTION.

- Nissan wraps the bed in double steel walls to help prevent damage to exterior sheet metal from shifting cargo. Not in Toyota.
- Cab in Deluxe and Long Bed seats 3 across with more hiproom than Chevy S-10 or Toyota; more legroom than Toyota.
- 4 x 4 also available in ST Sport Truck and King Cab® (up to 9 cubic feet of extra inner space for cargo or jump seats in King Cab®).

Powerful, comfortable, reliable (eight of every 10 Nissan- built trucks sold in the past 23 years are still working hard, playing hard). That's the new Nissan 4 x 4. It's one heck-of-a-hunk-of-a truck!

NISSAN
WE ARE DRIVEN
DATSUN

SHOWN ABOVE: NISSAN LONG BED 4 x 4 (LEFT) AND KING CAB® 4 x 4.

ENDURO TEST:

Kawasaki KDX200

The enduro faithful prepare for the second coming of the KDX.

BY RON LAWSON

The arrival of the Kawasaki KDX200 marks the death of one of the world's greatest enduro bikes. The KDX175 is gone. Its passing was a slow, lingering affair that had been predicted for more than a year, even though the machine was in good health to the very end. In fact, the last 175 was nearly unbeatable. It's just that the original 1980 175 *was* unbeatable. It was the lightest, best-suspended and quickest machine you could have on the trail. And this earned the KDX a lifetime spot in the enduro-winner hall of fame, with an honorable mention for also being the perfect mount for less-experienced and beginning trail riders.

But time and other motorcycles caught up with the KDX, leaving a multitude of Kawasaki loyalists with a good, but no-longer-great enduro bike. So the new 200 has to do more than just pick up where the 175 left off; it's expected to hit 1983 with the same impact the 175 had in 1980. And to do that means that for any rider and any trail, it must once again be the best enduro machine made.

And the 200 does have much in common with the first KDX—like its ability to fill its rider with a feeling of invincibility on tight trails. Experts quickly learn that the KDX is so agile that it takes almost no effort to change lines, and beginners soon discover that their mistakes go almost unnoticed. Much of this versatility comes about because the 200's frame is similar to the 175's. Kawasaki knew it had a formula that worked, so the steering head angle and trail are almost identical to the original KDX's. The swingarm has been made 30mm shorter, though, and Kawasaki has changed the riding position, making it less cramped by moving the footpegs down and back, and also by raising and narrowing the seat.

Those changes might not sound like much, but they're enough to make the KDX200 handle even better than its predecessor. The 200 is more neutral-handling, and so several different techniques can be used to guide it through the turns. You can use the proven KDX175 cornering method of sliding the rear wheel by either touching the rear brake or grabbing a handful of throttle, or you can use the 200's shorter wheelbase to its best advantage by steering with the front wheel. That's an option the KDX175 rider never had, simply because that machine was so long. But that wheelbase change doesn't mean the new KDX is any less stable than the 175. In most situations, the machine is steady and secure, traits that come in handy when branches and vines catch on the handlebar and try to change your course. A quick impact on either side of the

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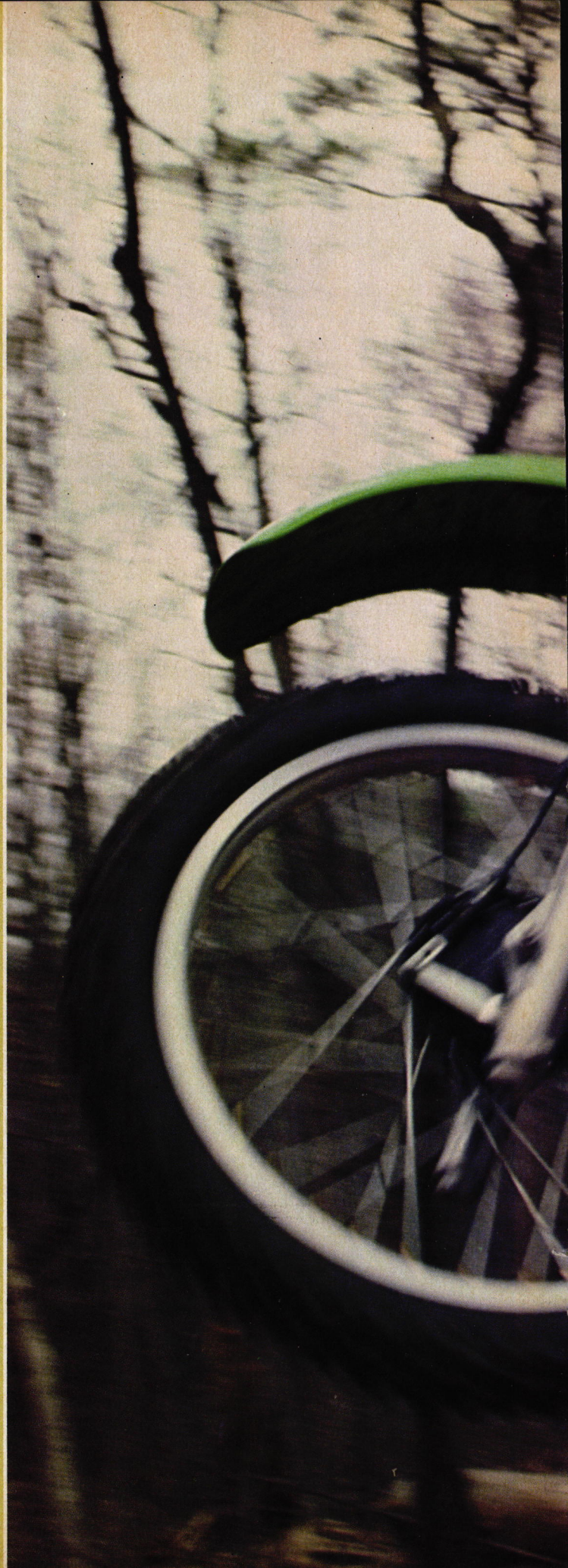


PHOTOGRAPHY ©1983 TOM RILES, VIC HUBER

KDX

200's bar won't put you off the trail. The bike just snaps back to its original line as if it knows where it's supposed to go.

Indeed, the KDX is so forgiving it seems like as long as you're *on* the bike you're in the right position to do just about anything. Most of the quick weight shifts and body movements that can mean the difference between just riding and riding fast simply aren't necessary on the Kawasaki. Of course, you do have to move around to maneuver the KDX, but extreme body English is unnecessary. And so, the KDX lets its rider think he's better than he really is by removing some of his most difficult tasks.

If all this sounds a little too good to be true, perhaps you can understand why the original KDX developed such a strong following almost overnight. But unlike the 175, the new Kawasaki isn't about to be caught in the rough stuff by enduro bikes with better, more up-to-date suspension; that's because there are none. In the rear, the Uni-Trak has undergone major surgery, and now has little in common with the original design, aside from still using a single Kayaba shock. But for the 200, the shock linkage has been redesigned to give the KDX rising spring and damping rates. The shock itself is new, too, and features a smaller, lighter body and a remote reservoir that the 175's lacked. And in case you don't like the stock rear settings, you can experiment. The shock now has four rebound-damping settings and Kawasaki also offers an optional stiffer spring.

We found that for riders weighing 160 pounds or less, the standard setup (stock spring, second-quickest rebound setting) performs as well as anything on the trail. Sudden impacts never throw the bike off-course, and most little bumps go unnoticed. Heavy riders, however, might have a bottoming problem, so for those weighing all the way up to the 200-pound mark, the optional stiffer spring probably is necessary. Either way, the KDX200 has the best-performing Uni-Trak yet.

And the front end lives up to the performance of the rear, too. Like the Uni-Trak, the fork has come a long way since last season. The stanchion tube diameter is up from 36mm to 38mm, and the travel was increased slightly. And again, if the stock spring rate isn't right for you, there are alternatives. Kawasaki has three springs for the front: soft, standard and stiff. We found the standard spring worked well for most situations. Even when heavier riders did hit bottom, the impact was never harsh enough to put the bike out of shape.

Kawasaki has discovered what happens when you take one of the world's best enduro bikes and make it faster and lighter

You get the KDX200.

Of course, it's rare when *anything* on the trail throws a KDX out of shape. Part of the credit goes to the machine's weight, or rather its lack of weight. At 213 pounds, it's the lightest enduro racer you can buy. And when you combine that light weight with the KDX's new suspension, you have a bike with high potential for winning enduros.

But lighter weight and better suspension by themselves wouldn't be enough to satisfy those KDX riders. Remember, this bike's mission is to *exceed* the expectations of the last generation of KDX fans. That's why Kawasaki gave the bike an entirely new engine. Virtually no parts are interchangeable between the 175 and 200 powerplants. The displacement was increased from 173cc to 198cc via a 7.4mm longer stroke, which necessitated changes in the port timing and the exhaust pipe; but the port layout is similar to the 175's, with an unbridged exhaust port and four transfer ports. The top of the intake port still extends upward to form a booster transfer; but the 200's intake is so much wider that it has two bridges, whereas the 175's had none. And now two small passages lead from the intake port into the crankcase for better engine breathing.

Below the barrel are yet more changes. The crankcases were borrowed from this year's KX125 motocrosser, and they're much more compact than the old 175's. Internally, the gear ratios all were changed to give the 200 taller and closer overall gearing.

One feature carried over from last year's KDX175 is the Mikuni carburetor's oval venturi, although that venturi is 2mm smaller at 32mm. Kawasaki claims that the inverted-egg-shaped venturi provides all the low-end power benefits of a small-venturi carburetor with the top-end power provided by a large venturi.

And the KDX *does* have top-end power. In fact, the 200 will out-accelerate many 250cc enduro machines and even a few Open-classers. Of course, enduros rarely involve head-to-head dragraces, but they always include tight, difficult uphill sections that test a bike's low-rpm lugging ability. And in that respect, the 200 ranks about one notch below the KDX175, which became a legend in its own time for its trials-like chuggability at sub-idle rpm. Actually, the 200's engine generates a bit more bottom-end torque than the 175's, but the new bike's first gear is a lot (more than 16 percent) taller; thus, noticeably less torque is delivered to the 200's rear wheel, and its engine must run 16 percent slower at any given trail speed in first gear.

Nonetheless, there's still enough low-end power to get you out of some of the nastiest low-speed situations. But keeping the KDX on the pipe and taking advantage of its top-end power is the way to do well in enduros. And with the KDX, that's much easier than it sounds. The machine cooperates with its rider through a quick-revving motor and instant throttle-response. Those power characteristics combine with the machine's agility to allow the KDX rider a natural rhythm. Just hold the throttle wide-open and use the clutch and gearbox to regulate your speed. It's not unusual to use that technique on underpowered motorcycles, but the KDX is anything but underpowered. So when

Continued

you *do* twist the right grip to the stop, you suddenly find that the scenery is flashing by in a blur. And you'll likely also discover that you're flashing by other riders in a blur. This is just another way the KDX lets you ride over your head without getting you into trouble.

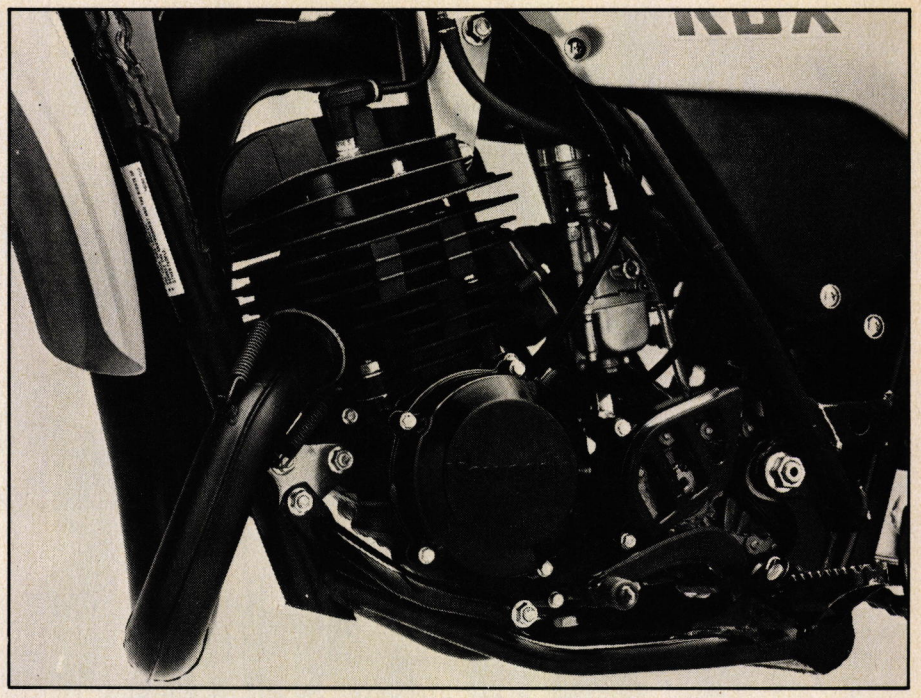
If trouble does arrive, though, it's going to be in the form of that sudden, no-traction uphill that most enduros seem to include. You know, the hill that cuts your speed in half and sends your left hand searching for the clutch lever to keep the revs up. The 200's clutch can handle mild abuse, but if the uphill is very steep and very long, the KDX's tallish first gear forces a severe case of clutch overfan. Soon the plates expand and disengagement becomes a memory. The clutch actually was taken from the KX125 and has two plates more than the KDXs of old. But the original 175s didn't have any such clutch problems, so it appears that even the new, heavier clutch isn't fully up to the task of handling the 200's new gearing and power output.

Another potential problem with the 200 is piston seizure. During the first few miles in the life of the KDX200, the intake port's two bridges can expand due to heat, and bow outward, resulting in a seizure. Kawasaki claims that as long as the bike is broken-in according to the procedure outlined in the owner's manual (running the engine at low rpm for the first hour, with frequent stops to allow the motor to cool), there shouldn't be any problem. Kawasaki also recommends tearing down the top end and inspecting the piston and cylinder after the first 30 minutes of operation.

Thankfully, due to the KDX's 90-day warranty, the cost of repairing any such seizure should be Kawasaki's and not the owner's. And a good thing, too, since the linerless, Electrofusion-coated cylinder cannot be bored and has a suggested retail price of $153.30. We have heard of a few KDX200s that seized despite a good break-in, but then, some have survived without being broken-in at all.

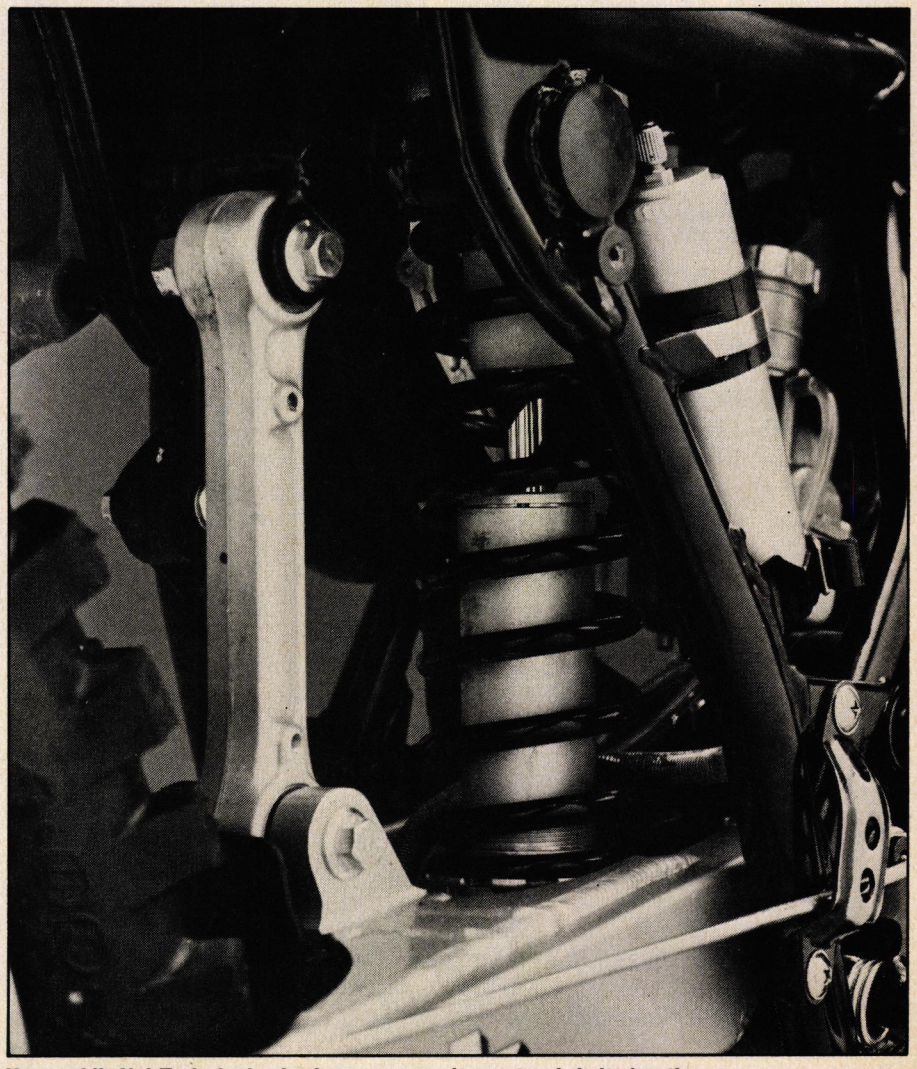
Our bike was a survivor, apparently, since it suffered no seizures during our test. We did, however, encounter other problems, like the KDX's big appetite for fuel and the small tank that feeds it; anyone intending to go very far on a trail ride had better bring his hiking boots. The bike's range during the test was from 38 to 50 miles to a tank, meaning that you'll have to find a way to get extra fuel if you're in an enduro that has long stretches between gas stops.

It would be difficult to locate other



A longer stroke and a smaller carburetor usually make for a torquier motor

But the KDX200 still makes most of its power in the high-rev range.



Kawasaki's Uni-Trak single-shock rear suspension system is in its fourth year

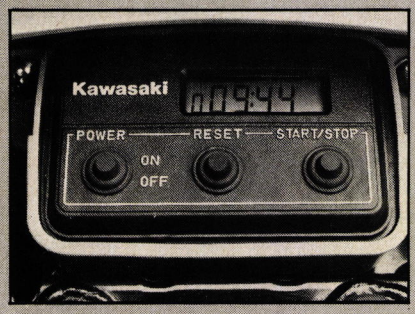
And for its birthday it gets a remote reservoir, rising rates and reduced size.

Making Time With The KDX

• There's a fundamental fact of enduro life that has long been overlooked by all motorcycle manufacturers: Timekeeping is as much a part of competitive enduro riding as the riding itself. So it's more than a little odd that no enduro bike has ever rolled off the assembly line fitted with any sort of timekeeping equipment.

Until now. Because Kawasaki has become the first manufacturer to acknowledge this need by equipping the KDX200 (and KDX250) with a timekeeping system that can, with the aid of a route chart, allow you to figure out where you are in an enduro and if you've arrived there on time. The system, powered by a small, watch-type battery, mounts to the fork's top triple clamp and features an LCD tripmeter and chronometer that both use the same display window—although not at the same time. You must push a button next to the twistgrip to switch the display from elapsed time to accrued mileage or vice-versa. There also are three pushbuttons on the instrument's face—one that switches the system on and off, one that starts the timer and another, called the reset, that allows mileage adjustments as needed along the trail.

In theory, all of this seems like the ideal solution to a long-standing problem. But in real-world enduro use, Kawasaki's timekeeping system is far from perfect. For one thing, the display is hard to read in the heat of enduro competition. You usually don't know which mode is being displayed until you stare at it for a second or two; then you must swivel your right thumb up off of the twistgrip, punch the mode-change button and stare at the display once again, all just to get one mileage/time reading. Further complicating matters is the fact that the display's numerals are often impossible to discern due to glare, reflections or even the shadow cast by the top of the front numberplate. And when



you're standing up on the footpegs, the numberplate altogether obscures your view of the readout.

What's more, the mileage-reset function is as hard to use as the readout is to see. The reset button must be held down about one full minute just to add or subtract 10 miles—far too time-consuming to be practical. And resetting to an exact mileage figure is an extremely difficult operation, especially when you're moving along the trail. The system alternates between adding mileage and subtracting it every time the button is pushed, which means that if you let off the button at any time before the exact desired setting is reached, the next push will start the readout counting in the other direction. And that difficulty was all the more aggravating on our test bike, since its tripmeter was inaccurate enough (it gained about 0.1 mile for every 5 miles traveled) to require frequent resetting.

Nonetheless, since the KDXs are the only enduro bikes to have *any* kind of timekeeping equipment, Kawasaki is to be applauded for its efforts. All that remains now is for the company's engineers to get a stronger grasp on the proven techniques of enduro timekeeping so they can devise a better system for next year's bikes. That's an important goal, too; because as every enduro rider knows, arriving at a check on the wrong minute can make a sizable difference—like the difference between winning and losing.

—Ron Lawson

Keeping the Kawasaki on time can be an attention-consuming process

After all, looking at a display isn't the only thing you have to do in an enduro.

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Wheel Travel, Front/Rear, In.	Weight (fuel tank empty), lb.	Weight Bias, Front/Rear, percent	Steering Head Angle/Trail, degrees/inches	Transmission, number of speeds
Kawasaki KDX200—'83	9.8/11.0	212	47.5/52.5	28.0/4.8	6
Kawasaki KDX175—'82	9.6/10.5	227	46.3/53.7	28.0/4.7	6
Suzuki PE175—'82	10.0/9.8	229	45.9/54.1	28.0/4.4	6
Yamaha IT175—'82	10.2/11.2	216	47.0/53.0	28.5/4.9	6
Honda XR200R—'81	9.0/10.2	228	45.2/54.8	28.4/4.9	6
Honda XR350R—'83	10.9/10.4	253	47.3/52.7	26.0/3.9	6

Continued

Charting The Changes

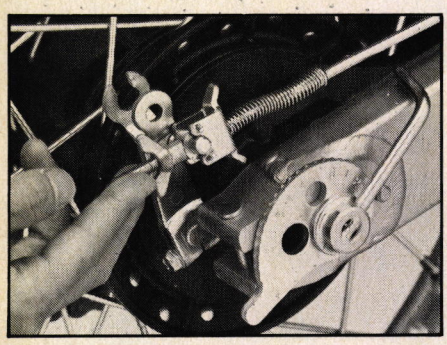
Engine: The KDX200 motor shares almost nothing with the '82 KDX175's. The stroke was lengthened 7.4mm to bring the displacement up to 198.4cc, and the intake port is so much wider it requires two bridges. That port also has two new passages leading directly into the crankcase. The oval-venturi Mikuni carburetor is back, but, now at 32mm, is 2mm smaller.

Engine cases that are more compact than those on the 175 come from the KX125 motorcrosser, as does the clutch. The individual gear ratios and the primary and final gearing all were changed to give the 200 taller and closer ratios.

Chassis: The basic frame also is much like the '83 KX125's while still bearing a resemblance to the KDX175's. The swingarm is 30mm shorter than the 175's, though, and the footpegs are lower and further to the rear. The hubs are smaller in diameter, but the brake shoes are wider so that the brakes have about the same stopping power. And the rear wheel now is designed to detach quickly. The KDX also has double-walled rims at both ends.

Suspension: The Kayaba rear shock has a smaller-diameter body, a remote reservoir and four rebound-damping settings, all new for this year. And the Uni-Trak system now has a simplified linkage that provides a rising-rate rear suspension. The front fork has more travel and the stanchion tube diameter was increased from 36mm to 38mm.

Details: The seat was made narrower and taller than the 175's. The silencer now is rebuildable. The KDX200 is equipped with an LCD digital tripmeter/chronometer for enduro timekeeping. Air filtration now is through a dual-stage foam element. The fenders and numberplates have new cosmetics, and the shift lever now has a folding tip.



Rear wheel detaches quickly

But there's always someone quicker.

shortcomings on the KDX. Oh, sure, the quick-detach rear wheel doesn't reattach very quickly, and the timekeeping system has some drawbacks (see "Making Time With The KDX," page 49), but these are features that some other enduro bikes don't even have. And the overall performance of the Kawasaki is strong enough to overshadow almost anything. The 200 is easier to ride than any other enduro bike, it's as quick as or quicker than anything in its class, and it should appeal to a broader range of riders than any other enduro machine.

But then, that shouldn't be so surprising. The KDX175 is gone, but the qualities that made it so special to so many riders continue in the 200—only with less weight, more power and better suspension. No, the KDX200 shouldn't surprise anyone. The bike is just the logical outcome of greatness improved. •

Ride Review

• They tell me this bike is good enough to win enduros, but I don't care. I'm not a dirt guy, since the idea of kickstarting a bike that's on top of me in a ditch just never got me grinning. Oh, I'd dutifully listen as Dean and Lawson recounted their tales of dirty destruction, but secretly I'd be pitying those addled souls. I always figured anything that sounds like such hard work just couldn't be fun. The KDX200 changed my mind.

See, this thing might be a winner, but it's also foolproof. Which means it's also perfect for a floundering idiot like me. Lawson's Killer Death Hill is a snap when I'm on the KDX; ditto for his Trail Of Sustained Terror. I'm Jack Penton himself whenever I'm on this machine. I'm still not going to enter any enduros, but the KDX just might have made me into a dirt guy. *—Joe Kress*

• Kawasaki's KDX200 just destroyed my definition of a real enduro bike. I always figured that anything with less than Open-class displacement wouldn't have what it takes to handle the rough stuff—the tightest, most rock-strewn and branch-infested terrain this side of a nuclear test site. But as it turns out, the KDX's small displacement is its biggest advantage.

What the KDX lacks in low-end grunt it makes up for in other ways. It's light, it has fast throttle-response and no Open-classer could even hope to match its agility. And best of all, the KDX fits me like a well-worn glove; the pegs, bar and seat all are perfectly positioned.

Oh, I know the machine has problems, but I don't care. Because at the KDX's ridiculously inexpensive retail price, it's more than just a real enduro bike. It's a real bargain, too. *—George Wegner*

• The KDX175 was a mighty tough act to follow, but the KDX200 has done an admirable job of it, offering even more of the magical performance that got a slew of dirt riders—me included—addicted to the 175. But the 200's on-the-trail magic is tarnished by a few mysteries in its support systems. Like the timekeeping gear that's next to useless; the piston that threatens to seize; the unacceptably short range of the fuel tank; and the absence of a mixture-adjustment screw on the carburetor (making it impossible to quickly fine-tune the off-idle throttle response to suit the ambient conditions).

The net effect of these design faux pas by Kawasaki is to detract from what easily could have been a virtually perfect enduro bike. Because of them, the KDX200 will have to settle for being merely a great enduro bike. *—Paul Dean*

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Kawasaki KDX200 — enduro

IMPORTER: Kawasaki Motors Corp., 2009 East Edinger Avenue, Santa Ana, California 92711

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $1649

ENGINE

Type ..... two-stroke vertical single
Port arrangement ... one reed-valve-controlled intake, four main transfers, one booster transfer, one exhaust
Bore and stroke ..... 66.0mm x 58.0mm
Displacement 198.4cc
Compression ratio (corrected) 7.7:1
Carburetion ... one 32mm oval-venturi Mikuni slide/needle
Air filter ..... two-stage washable oiled foam element
Lubrication ..... pre-mixed fuel and oil
Starting system ..... primary kick
Ignition ..... flywheel-magneto CDI
Charging system ..... none; direct AC lighting

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive ..... straight-cut gears; 2.864:1 ratio
Clutch ..... wet, multi-plate
Final drive ..... #520 chain (5/8-in. pitch, 1/4-in. width); 3.692:1 (48/13) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.769	29.280	2.56
II	2.000	21.147	3.54
III	1.533	16.213	4.62
IV	1.235	13.061	5.74
V	1.042	11.014	6.80
VI	0.870	9.194	8.15

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front ..... Kayaba air-spring, 38mm stanchion tube diameter/9.8 in. (250mm)
Rear ..... single Kayaba shock, 4-position adjustable rebound damping, 20mm spring preload range/11.0 in. (280mm)

BRAKES

Front ..... drum, single-leading shoe
Rear ..... drum, single-leading shoe, rod-operated

TIRES

Front ..... 3.00-21 Dunlop Sports K490
Rear ..... 4.00-18 Dunlop Sports K490

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

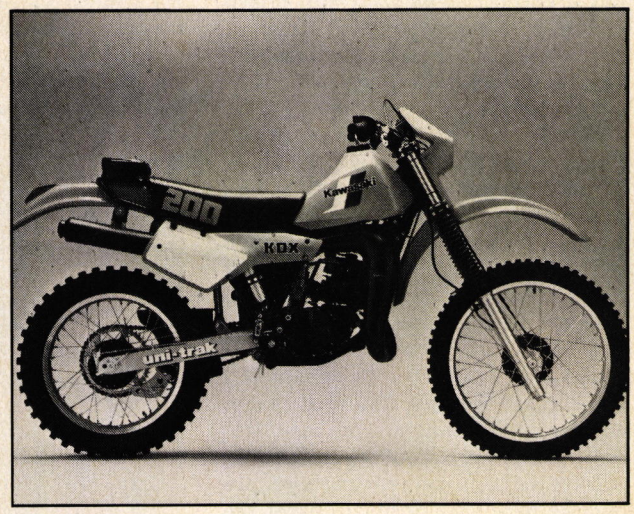
Weight ..... 213 lbs. (96.6kg)
Weight distribution ..... 47.5% front, 52.5% rear
Wheelbase ..... 56.7 to 58.1 in. (1440 to 1475mm)
Seat height ..... 36.4 in. (925mm)
Handlebar width ..... 32.9 in. (835mm)
Footpeg height ..... 15.5 in. (393mm)
Ground clearance ..... 12.3 in. (313mm), at frame crossmember
Steering head angle ..... 28.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail ..... 4.76 in. (121mm)
Frame ..... tubular mild steel, single front downtube
Fuel tank ..... plastic, 2.9 gal. (10.8/), including 0.2 gal. (0.8/) reserve
Instrumentation ... LCD tripmeter resettable in hundredths, LCD elapsed timer resettable to zero

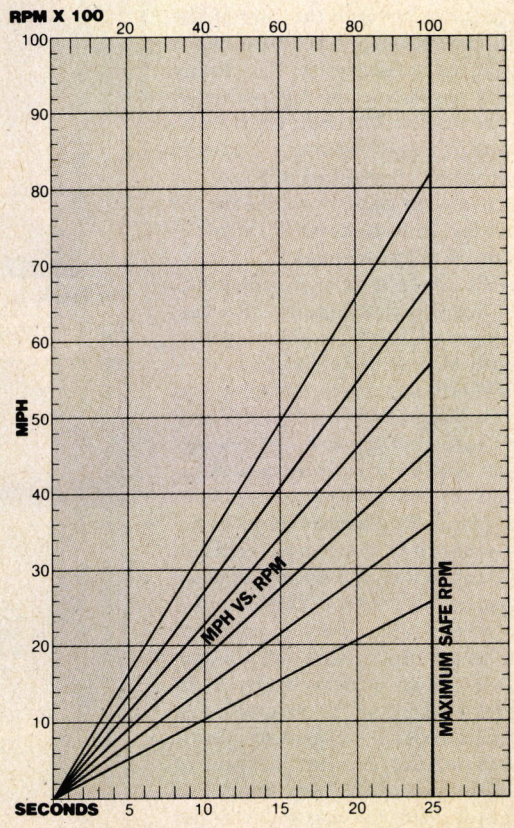
PERFORMANCE

Top speed (observed) ..... 80 mph (129 km/h)

WARRANTY: 90 days

AVAILABLE COLOR: green only





All weights and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty

PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Yoshimura Buddy Bag

Where the bungees come standard.

• Most products from Yoshimura R&D will make your four-stroke faster; this one won't. It's the Buddy Bag, Yoshimura's first venture into the soft-luggage market.

The Buddy Bag is a 12-by-9-by-9-inch collapsible case made of DuPont Cordura nylon, a material heavy enough to allow the bag to retain its shape without using internal panel stiffeners. Access to the bag's larger (of two) compartment is by a twin-pull zipper that opens around three sides of the bag. The second compartment, which measures 9½ by 7 by 3 inches, is sewn onto the outside of the Buddy Bag's main compartment flap and has its own zipper. Packed inside is a clear, elasticized rain-bonnet and a detachable shoulder strap.

These are all pretty much standard soft-luggage features, but what makes the Buddy Bag unique is its mounting system: built-in bungee cords. On both sides of the bag's main compartment are padded flaps that unzip to reveal the hooks of two bungee cords. These built-in bungees run between the floor of the main compartment and the base of the bag itself, and distinguish the Buddy Bag from any other soft-luggage trunk yet on the market. Without a harness to first strap in place, mounting usually is as simple as setting the bag in place, unzipping the side flaps and hooking on the bungees. In most cases it's a procedure that takes just seconds.

But it's those quick-on, quick-off, built-in bungees that can limit the bag, too. Because while it's possible to mount the Buddy Bag across a bike's gas tank in normal tankbag fashion, the bag was primarily designed for use over the passenger's section of the seat, or on a luggage rack. And it's exactly in those situations that the built-in bungees might not work as planned. On some bikes, the 21-inch free length of the bungee cords either will be too long or too short to reach a convenient hook-down. The trend toward smooth-sided body panels and away from grabrails makes this more of a problem on newer motorcycles. With some creative routing, though, or if you don't mind hooking bungees on plastic panels, a secure, slip-free fit can be effected on just about any bike. And even fully loaded, the bag will stay put without shifting around.

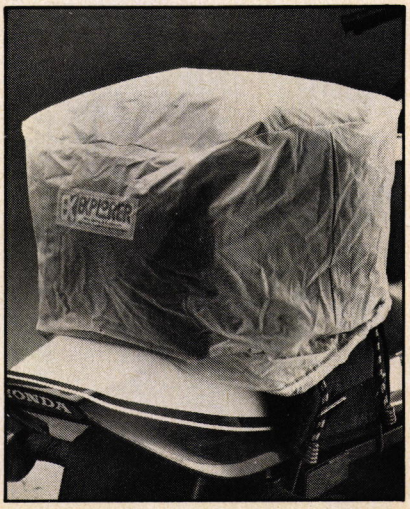
Once in place, the Buddy Bag is large enough to carry a change of clothes, the toiletries and other items needed for a comfortable few days on the road. And if the skies should suddenly open, the bag's water-repellant coating will keep those contents dry for a half-hour or more—long enough for you to pull over and fit the rain bonnet in place. But while the bag is roomy enough to easily swallow a full-face helmet, its dimensions won't allow a standard-size notebook to lie flat on the bag's floor. All of which might or might not prove to be a bother, depending upon what you normally carry.

The Buddy Bag's built-in bungee mounting clearly is its greatest asset. When the bag and bike are compatible, which means when there's a convenient place to hook the bungees, you won't find anything easier to use. The Buddy Bag retails for $65.95, in silver, red or blue, and is available at Yoshimura dealers or through Yoshimura R&D, Dept. CG, 4555 Carter Court, Chino, California 91710. No, it doesn't make your bike any faster—it only speeds up how long it takes to load your gear. —*Joe Kress*

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1983 DAVID DEWHURST

The Buddy Bag has all the soft-luggage features you'd expect—plus one more

Built-in bungees that allow mounting it almost anywhere.



Early Sunday morning.
On the way to her place in your Simpson 62.

It's that wonderful road you secret when the mood strikes. The air... chilled and crisp. Feel your 62 slice through in quiet comfort. The fit. So light and so right. With an optically molded shield that clicks down at a finger's touch. Snell '80 Certification. And the famous Simpson style and finish that has become classic. There's no better way to corner carve your way to that smile...

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A BEAUTIFUL DEFIN

Torque by itself isn't very exciting. It's just a way of measuring how much force an engine exerts on its crankshaft.

It's what torque does for a motorcycle that's the exciting part. A motorcycle, for instance, like the CX650 Custom.

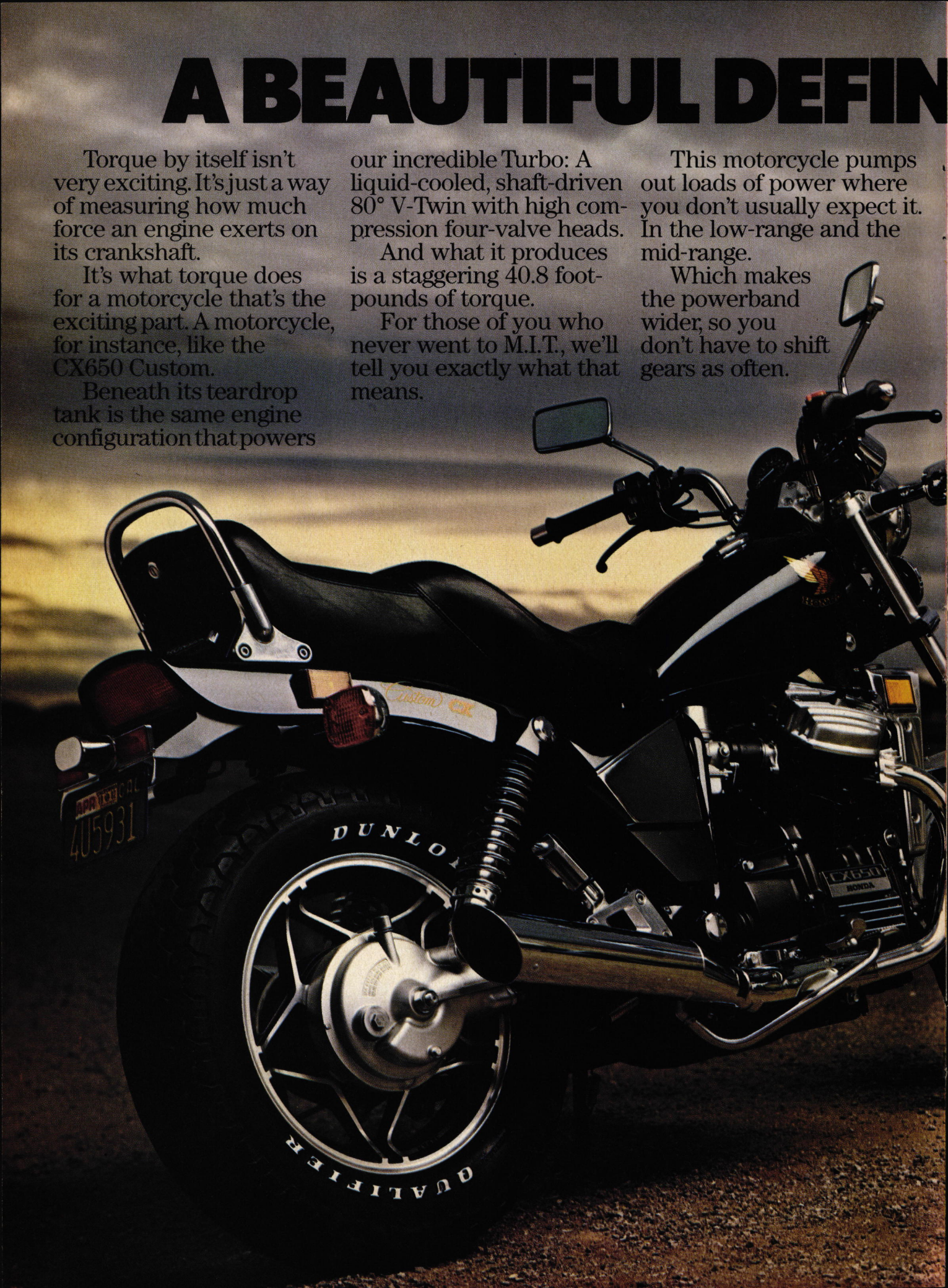
Beneath its teardrop tank is the same engine configuration that powers our incredible Turbo: A liquid-cooled, shaft-driven 80° V-Twin with high compression four-valve heads.

And what it produces is a staggering 40.8 foot-pounds of torque.

For those of you who never went to M.I.T., we'll tell you exactly what that means.

This motorcycle pumps out loads of power where you don't usually expect it. In the low-range and the mid-range.

Which makes the powerband wider, so you don't have to shift gears as often.



ITION OF TORQUE.

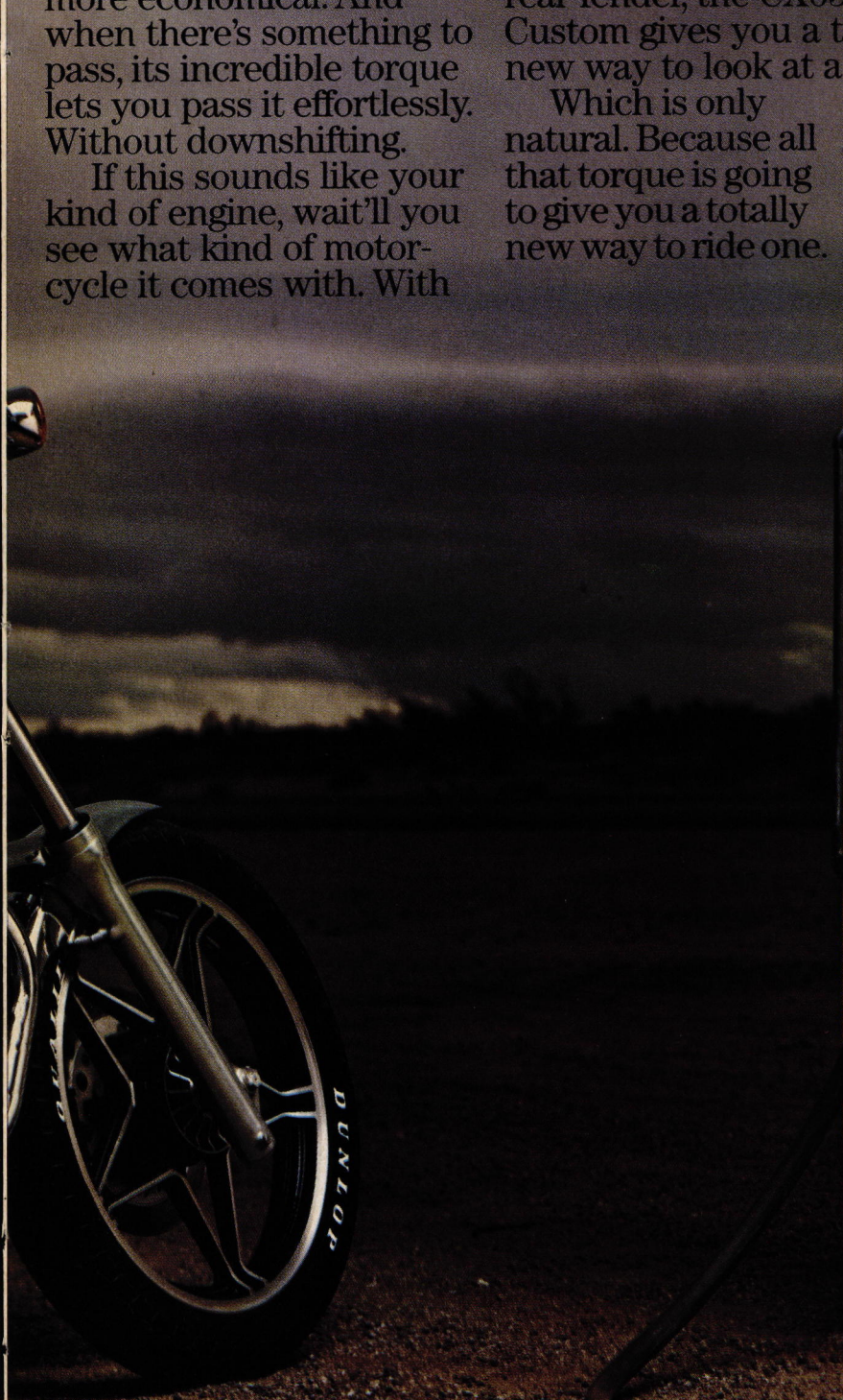
It can cruise at lower rpm's so it's smoother and more economical. And when there's something to pass, its incredible torque lets you pass it effortlessly. Without downshifting.

If this sounds like your kind of engine, wait'll you see what kind of motorcycle it comes with. With its rakish front forks, low slung seat and sculptured rear fender, the CX650 Custom gives you a totally new way to look at a 650.

Which is only natural. Because all that torque is going to give you a totally new way to ride one.

HONDA

FOLLOW THE LEADER



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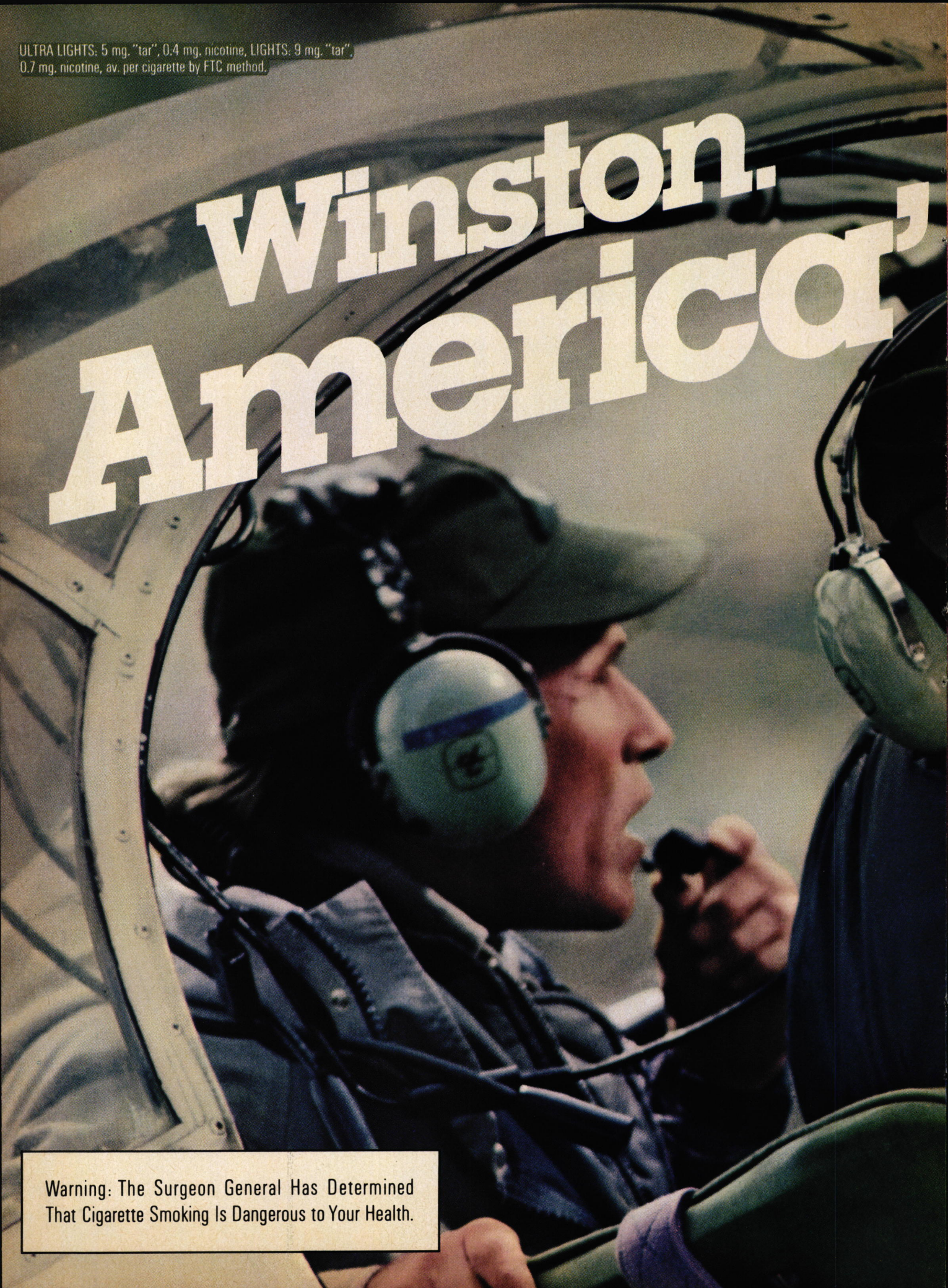
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ROAD TEST:

Majority rules.

BY LARRY WORKS

In satisfying buyer demands, the motorcycle business becomes a microcosm of democracy. Majority rules. That being the case, since an overwhelming majority of street riders in the U.S. choose factory customs when it's time to put money on the counter, baloney-slice mufflers and 16-inch rear wheels line the showrooms. It's a formula that's been shown to sell.

All of which goes a long way toward explaining the Nighthawk 550 you see here, swaddled in custom styling licks. But not *all* the way. You see, the "Nighthawk" designation covers a new kind of motorcycle, a sport-custom; a bike designed not only to appeal to custom buyers but to attract performance-hungry sport riders, as well. And so sport-custom—or Nighthawk—describes the best of all possible worlds, as it were, from a motorcycle-marketing viewpoint. While the Nighthawk terminology isn't new—Honda first used it in 1982—it didn't come into prominence until earlier this year, when it was used to identify the 1983 Nighthawk 650 (December 1982 issue)—a sport-custom with features to attract both kinds of riders. And the 650, with its moderate ergonomics, high-performance engine, TRAC anti-dive system, damping-adjustable shocks and clean, "Flow Through" style, *is* a new kind of custom.

But the Nighthawk 550 is not; at least, it doesn't spring from the same conceptual mold as its 650 counterpart. With its more-or-less standard factory-custom styling and Mark One buckhorn handlebar, the 550 seems to be not a new kind of custom at all; it's just a typical example of the old kind of custom—though one with a heavy dose of engine performance added.

That performance is pretty much what you'd expect, however, since, as far as powerplants are concerned, the Nighthawk 550 and 650 are strikingly similar. They share a narrow, six-speed, 16-valve, DOHC, shaft-driven four that barely differs from one bike to the other. In fact, despite the 650's earlier introduction, the engine was designed for the 550, and was readied for the 650 through a 7.4mm stroke increase. The two powerplants have common cams, cam timing, valve sizes, as well as the same valve lift and

Continued

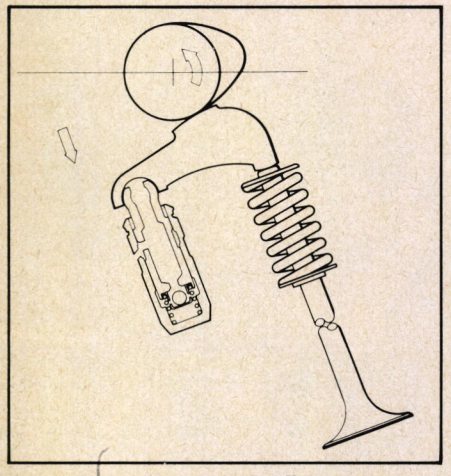
Honda Nighthawk 550

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1983 RICH CHENET, DAVID DEWHURST

compression ratio. Naturally, the stroke difference necessitated a few internal changes, and the crank, cylinders, rods, pistons and crankcases (the 550 has a 1mm-smaller main-bearing journal) aren't interchangeable between the two bikes. But other than those items—and the 550's smaller venturi diameter for its constant-vacuum Keihin carburetors—the engines differ only in primary drive ratio. The 550's is lower (higher numerically) to enhance the smaller bike's acceleration.

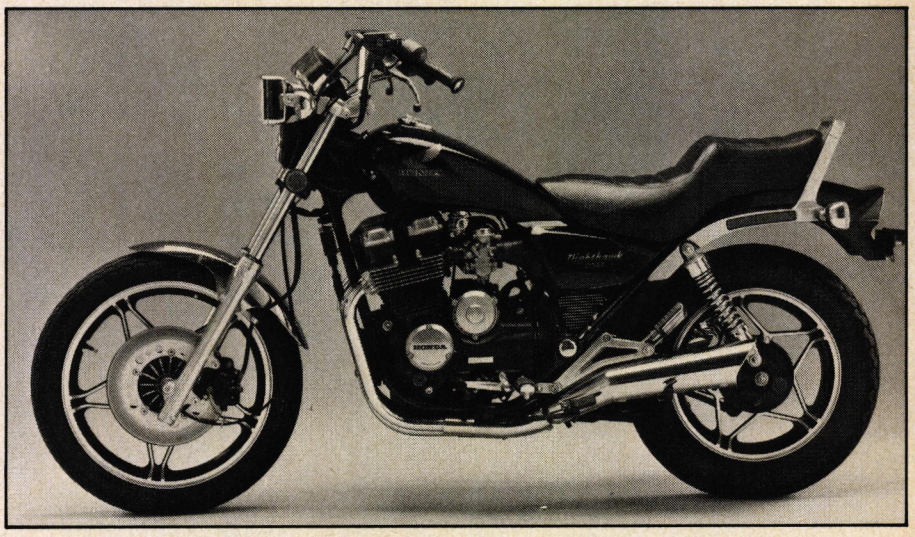
And acceleration is one thing the Nighthawk 550 *does* have. This 10-grand screamer streaks through the quarter-mile in a 650-class time of 12.461 seconds, making it the quickest 550 we've ever tested. It's more than one-tenth of a second quicker than the next 550 in line, Suzuki's GS550E. Low-end power on the Nighthawk is strong, too, though its delivery is marred by driveline lash in lower-speed, off- and on-throttle riding. And the result of hurried, brush-of-the-boot gearchanges will be occasional missed shifts. Slow, deliberate foot movements are required to shift the 550 cleanly, though it still clunks at each ratio change. The real reward comes once the Nighthawk's electronic tach registers 6200 rpm or so; then, the bike lunges forward as the engine kicks in hard, revving quickly—almost linearly—through the gears. That's all the more impressive, since the Nighthawk, with its rubber-mounted engine, is dead-smooth while it performs those accelerative antics.

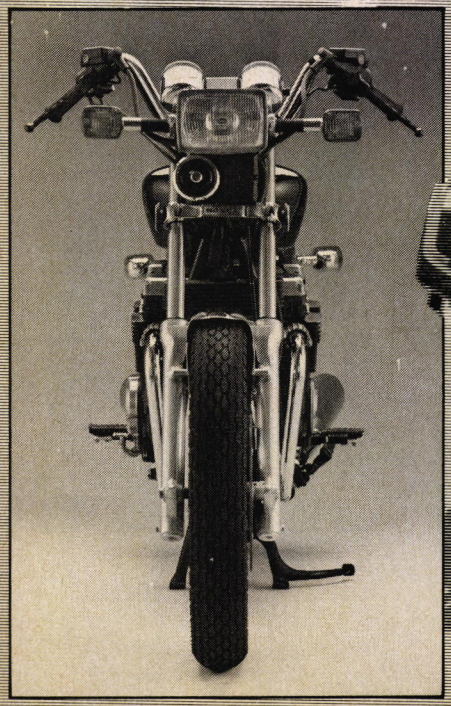
It should *stay* smooth, too, since the 550 Nighthawk also shares with the 650 a hydraulic lash-adjustment system that keeps the engine's valves in constant regulation. The system's 16 lash-adjusters reside in the 550's head, where they apply a constant pressure to the underside of each valve rocker, thus maintaining a zero-clearance between the valve stem and cam lobe. In practice, the system works flawlessly, not only compensating for engine temperature variations but also for normal wear in the valvetrain. That system, along with the breakerless electronic ignition, automatic cam-chain tensioner, adjustment-free, hydraulically actuated clutch and the 550's shaft drive, insure that routine maintenance will be simple. If you can

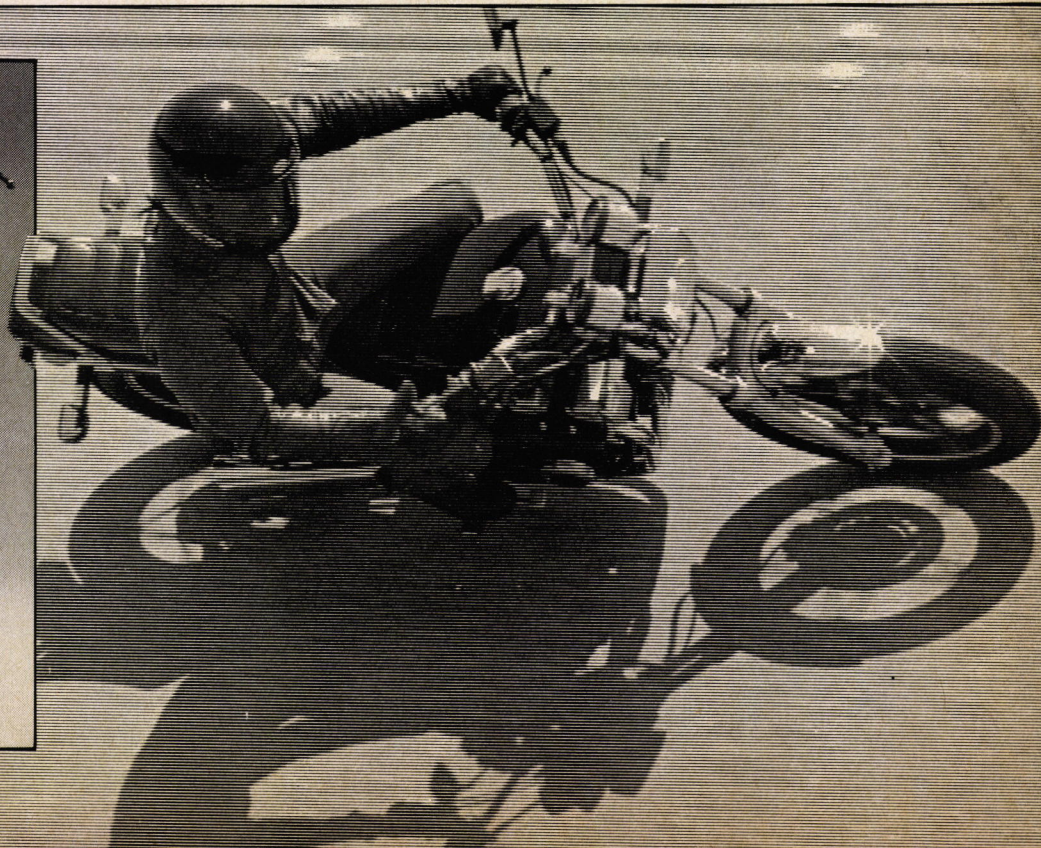


Cam follower pivots on lash-adjuster

Valve adjustment via hydraulics.







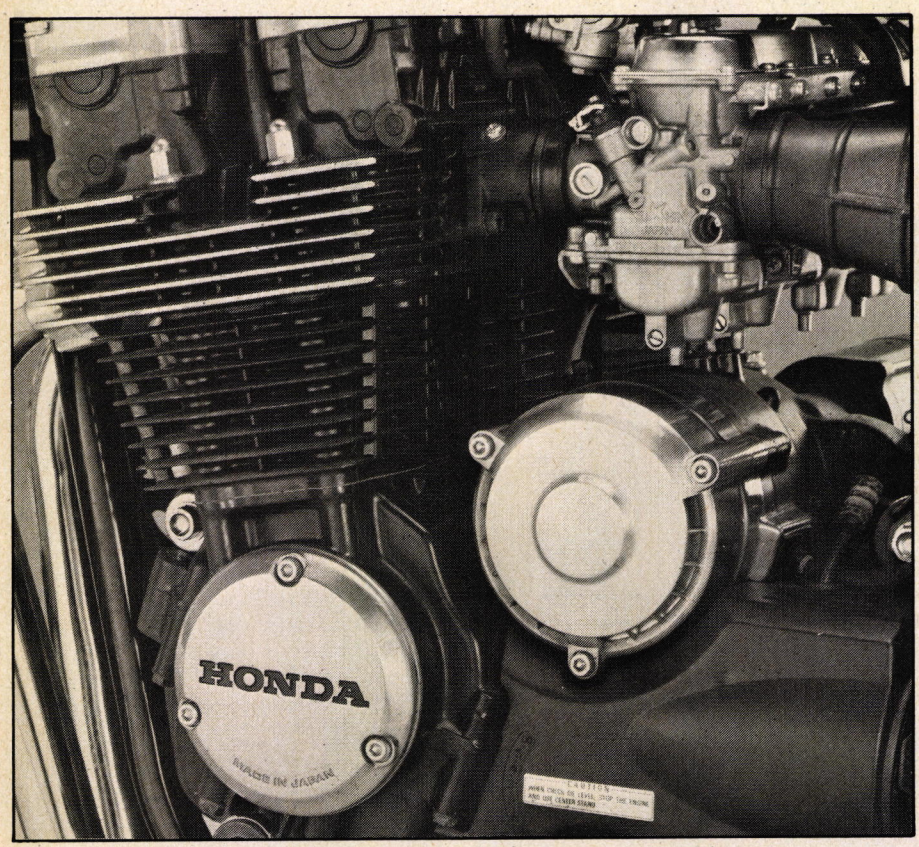
change oil and sparkplugs, you've got it wired.

So, between its top-of-the-class performance and nearly maintenance-free status, the 550's engine is hard to fault. It fits without a hitch into the dual-role, sport-custom niche that the 650 carved out. And given the similarity of the two engines, that should come as no surprise. In its chassis, though, the 550 shows a decidedly more custom-only bent. It's there that the 550 falls short of a sport-custom's avowed ability to satisfy the demands both of urban cruising as well as the high-speed chicanery that sporting riders indulge in—an ability that distinguishes the 650.

Part of that non-sporting attitude can be attributed to a combination of a wheelbase shorter than the 650's along with softer shocks, as well. While a shorter wheelbase might be expected to enhance the 550's sporting manners, in this case it didn't, because the wheelbase was shortened by reducing the swingarm length one-half inch. And that shorter swingarm, coupled with the softer shocks, allows the 550 to exhibit more "chassis-jacking" than the 650. The difference isn't extreme, just enough to slightly upset the 550's handling when the throttle is opened or closed and the bike is heeled-over. Then, as the chassis moves up or down on its suspension, the bike wanders off-line, requiring a steering correction before the corner-exit.

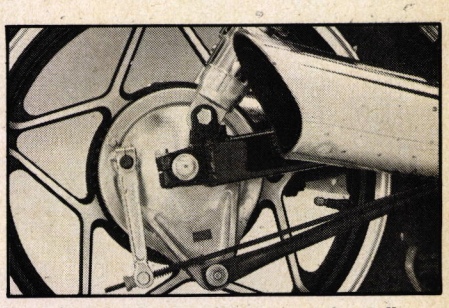
Don't get the impression that the Nighthawk 550 can't handle high-speed cornering, though, because that's hardly the case. At 429 pounds, the 550 is easy to flick into corners, and once in, the tucked-in exhaust pipes and grippy Dunlop tires allow considerable lean-angle exploration. What you'll find is that the footpeg feelers touch down first—though not unduly early—and going further approaches the limits of the tires' tread.

But you'll also find that pushing hard in the canyons can fade the 550's single front disc after an extended series of corners, and that the suspension limits the bike to perhaps eight-tenths cornering. Honda recommends 0-6 psi for fork air pressure, but each of our testers preferred settings in the 10-14-psi range when the going got twisty. Unfortunately, there was no way to exceed the



Gear-driven generator's location allows Nighthawk the narrowest engine in its class

And with the engine mounted low in the frame, a low cg, as well.



Rear drum brake complements one front disc

Part of the key to a 429-pound weigh-in.

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

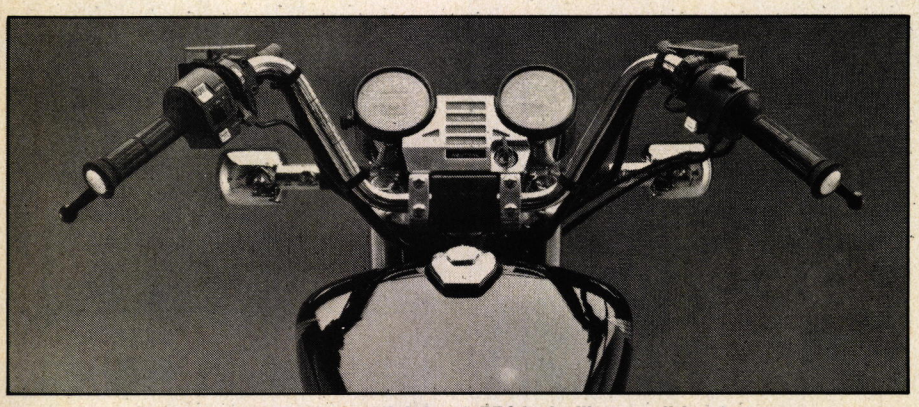
Make and Model	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs.	Stopping Distance From 60 mph,ft.
Honda Nighthawk 550—'83	12.46/102.9	114	429	125
Kawasaki KZ550 Spectre—'83	13.34/96.7	116	441	137
Kawasaki GPz550—'83	12.65/102.9	132	438	144
Suzuki GS550E—'83	12.59/104.0	120	443	135
Honda Nighthawk 650—'83	12.29/108.0	122	451	127
Honda CX650 Custom—'83	12.56/102.9	119	454	124

Continued

recommended setting for the shocks. We rode with the Showas set at their fifth (hardest) preload setting, which still seemed too soft for aggressive riding. And unlike the 650 Nighthawk's shocks, the 550's have no provision for damping adjustment, so there was no way to add in the rebound damping that the shocks needed for fast riding. And, at extreme speeds, the 550's wide handlebar and upright seating position started to impinge on steering precision.

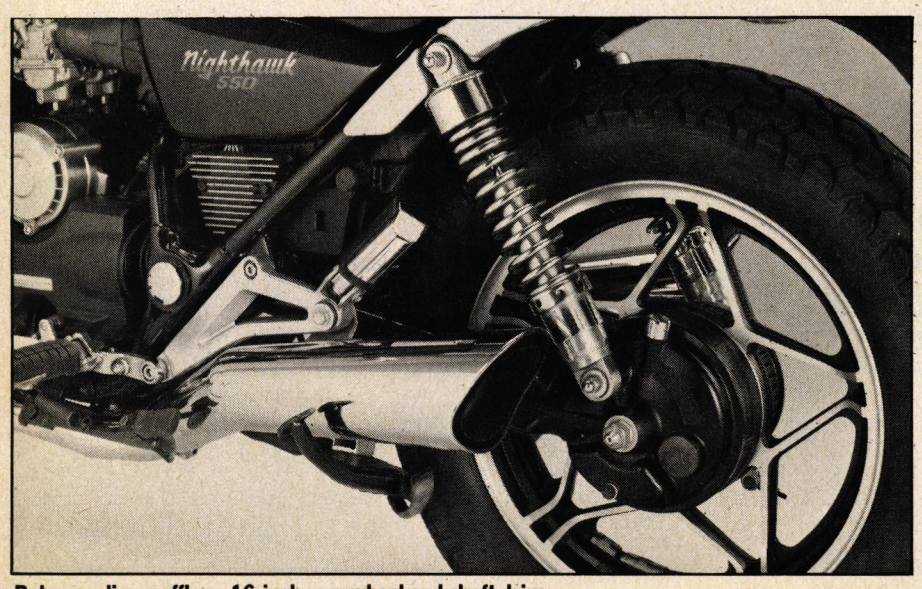
That's criticism at the far edge of performance, though, and most riders will never push that hard. And slower speeds—and lower suspension settings—pose no such problems. The wide handlebar, low-effort controls and crisp throttle response combine to allow the rider to pitch the bike through urban traffic as if he were in a low-grade obstacle course that had been set there for his amusement. One item that detracts from that amusement, however, is the 550's seat, whose curved, too-hard surface will put a relatively brief time limit on stints in the saddle. Until that point, though, the rider will have sampled vibration-free mirrors, light, responsive steering and firm, predictable braking—as well as the engine's ability to fire the bike forward when the hammer is dropped. Around town, you couldn't ask for much more than the Nighthawk delivers.

Overall, though, the Honda comes up short of those lofty goals established by its 650 stablemate. And that's despite the fact that the 550 is, undeniably, the hot rod of its class—custom *or* sport. All of which isn't a reason to avoid the 550, especially if you're part of the riding majority that prefers customs, because it *is* a sporty custom, even if not precisely a sport-custom. Given the buying trends in American motorcycling, the Nighthawk 550 probably will move through dealerships almost as fast as it hustles down the dragstrip. But that shouldn't be too surprising: If you were going to think up the modern moto-success formula, a midsize, shaft-drive rocket with custom styling would be right on the money. •



Despite its sport-custom nomenclature, Nighthawk 550 looks like a traditional custom

But part of that look is the skinny-hipped, 16-valve engine you don't see here.



Baloney-slice mufflers, 16-inch rear wheel and shaft drive

Popular formula for an Urban Express.

Ride Review

• Sure, I know the 550 Nighthawk is a city-slicker, and it's well-bred to take on the hardships of urban life. The quick steering lets me thread through traffic with ease, while the cushy suspension isolates me from paving irregularities, and the high-revving, low-maintenance engine even makes the Nighthawk the new speedster of the class.

But I need to get away from the city now and then for a little winding-road R&R, and that's where the Nighthawk loses its composure. In fast, bumpy corners, setting the suspension at maximum preload levels still won't keep the bike from bobbing and weaving so much that I wonder who's in charge, and that's only after the saddle has ambushed me from behind. Which just goes to show that you can take the Nighthawk out of the city, but you can't take the city out of the Nighthawk. —*Charles Everitt*

• The Nighthawk 550 confuses me. And not with its performance as much as with its looks. Honda has designated this 550 as a "Nighthawk," meaning—by that company's own definition—that it's supposed to offer excellent sporting performance with styling that bridges the gap between traditional sportbikes and the usual factory-custom cruisers. Fair enough. But this particular Nighthawk *looks* every bit the part of the stereotypical factory custom, and the bolt-upright seating needed to achieve those looks has noticeably detracted from the 550's ability to execute the sport-riding half of that contract.

Which is why I think Honda has shot itself in the foot with this bike. If the people at Honda don't fully understand what the Nighthawk concept is all about, how can anyone else? I thought I did, but now I'm not sure. —*Paul Dean*

• As often as not, sportbikes—pure sportbikes—serve as showroom-floor benches. The customers use them to sit on while deciding which custom to buy. So, to me, it's no surprise that the Nighthawk 550 looks the part of the custom and not the bench. Let's not forget, the idea was to sell motorcycles.

But what I do find surprising is the amount of punch packed into this Nighthawk. Because while looks alone will sell, Honda is offering a lot more than looks here, and not being subtle about it, either. Quarter-mile times are the Nighthawk 550's main claim to fame. And the ad copy is true; this bike will squirt through the lights in 12.4 seconds. When a 550 can do that I'm more than surprised—I'm amazed. This bike just might have put a few more benches on the showroom floor. —*Joe Kress*

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Honda Nighthawk 550 — street

IMPORTER: American Honda Motor Company, 100 West Alondra Boulevard, Gardena, California 90247

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $2548

ENGINE

Type . . . . . four-stroke transverse vertical four
Valve arrangement . . . . . double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke . . . . . 60.0mm x 50.6mm
Displacement 572.3cc
Compression ratio 9.5:1
Engine redline . . . . . 10,000 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . four 26.8mm Keihin constant-vacuum
Air filter . . . . . disposable paper element
Lubrication . . . . . wet sump
Starting system . . . . . electric only
Ignition . . . . . transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . . . 12-volt; 280-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 12-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . straight-cut gears; 1.863:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate
Transmission-to-driveshaft drive . . . . . spiral-bevel gears; 1.125:1 ratio
Driveshaft-to-rear-wheel drive . . . . . spiral-bevel gears; 3.091:1 ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.769	17.937	4.11
II	1.850	11.983	6.15
III	1.429	9.253	7.97
IV	1.154	7.474	9.87
V	0.966	6.254	11.79
VI	0.821	5.321	13.86

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . Showa air-spring, 37mm stanchion tube diameter/6.1 in. (156mm)
Rear . . . . . dual Showa shocks, 5-position adjustable spring preload/4.7 in. (120mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . single-action hydraulic caliper, 11.5-in. (292mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . drum, single-leading shoe, rod-operated

TIRES

Front . . . . 100/90-19 57S Dunlop Gold Seal F-11 tubeless
Rear . . . . . 130/90-16 67S Dunlop K627 tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

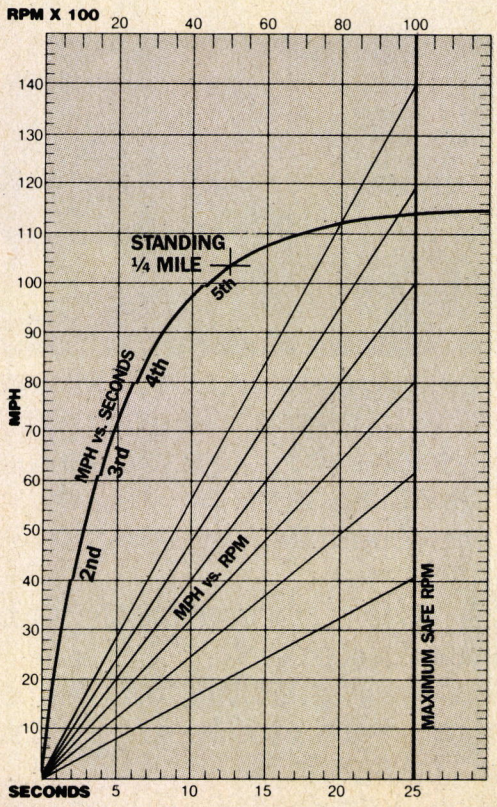
Weight . . . . . 429 lbs. (194.6kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . 46.7% front, 53.3% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . . 815 lbs. (370kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 366 lbs. (166kg)
Wheelbase . . . . . 57.3 in. (1455mm)
Seat height . . . . . 31.5 in. (800mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 29.7 in. (755mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 13.2 in. (335mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . 6.6 in. (167mm), at exhaust crossover
Steering head angle . . . . . 29.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 4.21 in. (107mm)
Frame . . . . . tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity . . . . . 3.4 qt. (3.2l)
Fuel tank . . . . . steel, 3.3 gal. (12.5l), including 0.7 gal. (2.5l) reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . 37 to 49 mpg (16 to 21 km/l)
Average fuel consumption . . . . . 42 mpg (18 km/l)
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . 122 to 162 miles (196 to 261km)
Cruising range, reserve only . . . 26 to 34 miles (42 to 55km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated . . . . . 26 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated . . . . . 49 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 12.461 sec., 102.97 mph (166 km/h)
Top speed (observed) . . . . . 114 mph (183 km/h)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . 30 ft. (9.1m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . . . 125 ft. (38.1m)

WARRANTY: 12 months unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLORS: Black, Candy Red



All weights and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty

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**Purchase option price based on a residual value of 40% of the original selling price. © 1983 BMW of North America, Inc. The BMW trademark and logo are registered.

SPORT LINES

Cycle Guide's True Tales of Race Courses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

EDITED BY DAIN GINGERELLI

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1983 PAUL BUCKLEY

Hurricane Hannah is Back

Gale force wins return.

• Bob Hannah enjoyed two things in his early years of racing: winning and verbally stirring up hornets' nests. He was good at both, too, winning more AMA National and Supercross races than any other rider, while leaving controversy in his wake with his quick wit and quicker tongue.

But a water skiing accident temporarily sidelined him a couple of years ago, and many people thought The Hurricane was finished. The Eighties brought in blue skies for new, and younger, motocross racers while Hannah sat on the sidelines and mended. He recovered from those injuries, but the old Storm wasn't the same on the track. Hannah raced, but he didn't win. And for a guy who enjoys the limelight, especially in the winner's circle, life was depressing. Hannah needed a change, as did his employer, Yamaha, the only factory he had raced for since turning AMA pro in 1975.

Continued

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1983 DAVID DEWHURST

The Hurricane hovers high in the sky over Florida

Bob Hannah said he would win the Daytona Supercross, and he did.

Hannah began shopping around last winter and eventually, on the advice of team coordinator Roger De Coster, Honda picked him up. The conditions, though, were limited to a one-year contract, something foreign to a superstar such as The Hurricane. But since he felt the Yamahas didn't have enough horsepower to win, Hannah figured a one-year deal with Honda was better than no deal at all.

And horsepower came with the Honda package. Soon Hannah spoke of winning again. The hiatus from victory circle, he said, would shortly be over. But the grey cloud that had followed him the previous couple of years showed up again at the Anaheim Supercross season opener. After a

© 1983 PAUL BUCKLEY

David Bailey has been consistent

But, then, so has Hannah.

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the only saddlebags good enough to wear the name Eclipse.

Feature for feature, no other saddlebags can match them. But don't take our word for it. Compare other brands with Eclipse and then decide.

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☑	☐	Aircraft aluminum stiffener and molded bottom panel.
☑	☐	Internal Support Frame. (pat. pend.)*
☑	☐	Forward cut-away for passenger heel clearance.
☑	☐	Three compartments per side, including detachable fanny pack.
☑	☐	Removable exhaust/abrasion shield.
☑	☐	Adjustable internal divider separates main compartment.
☑	☐	Snaps securely together as hand luggage.

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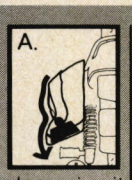
Ann Arbor, MI 48107
(313) 761-1170 (Mich. residents)

*Most soft saddlebags are pretty flimsy when empty. This makes it difficult to load your gear. And when packed, the load is poorly supported, causing it to sag and sway. Not only does this detract from the appearance of your motorcycle, it can seriously affect its handling. (See Fig. A)



Eclipse Saddlepacks incorporate a unique internal aluminum frame to support and define the shape of the pack at its outside, upper perimeter. This frame transfers the load back to the aluminum stiffener, for ease of loading and even weight distribution within the pack. It also maintains the shape of the pack when loaded or empty. No sag . . . no sway. (See Fig. B)

poor start in the Main, Hannah had to play catch-up just to finish fourth.

But two weeks later, The Hurricane ravaged the Seattle Supercross, where he stormed his way to the winner's champagne. Then, after a second and first at the Atlanta and Daytona Supercrosses, Hannah was in the Wrangler Super Series points lead. He was also as confident and cocky as ever.

The old Bob Hannah—the *real* Bob Hannah—emerged at a Honda dealer party the night before his Daytona win. Hannah eloquently expressed himself to Honda's gathering of eagles, stating that the people who made his old yellow racers "make a better berm than a motorcycle." Hannah paused for cheers from his new supporters.

Back on the track, Hannah split the Houston SX doubleheader with Suzuki's Mark Barnett, then went west for the opening round of outdoor racing at Hangtown. He left with two moto wins. In the process, he laid the foundation for a second AMA 250cc National championship. Another perfect score at the Saddleback National strengthened his position.

Meanwhile, the yellow-bike crewmen were fuming. They were angry at Hannah for his verbal "berm" shot but more irritated that he was winning. Finally, Mike Bell took charge at Dallas, putting Yamaha up front; Hannah was second.

Still, there are nearly 20 races remaining

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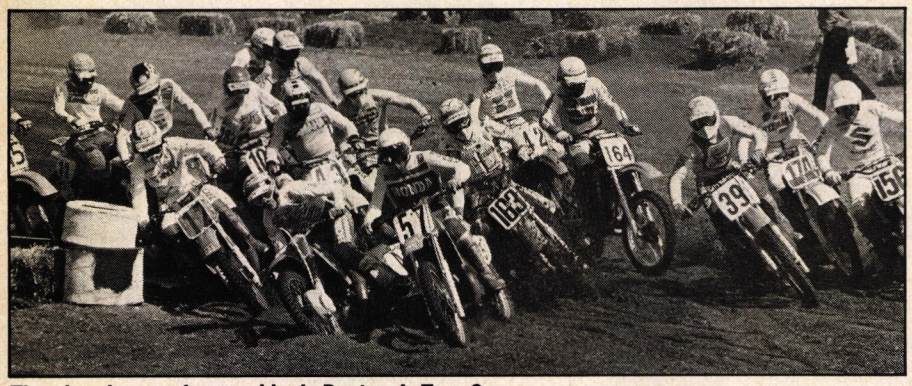
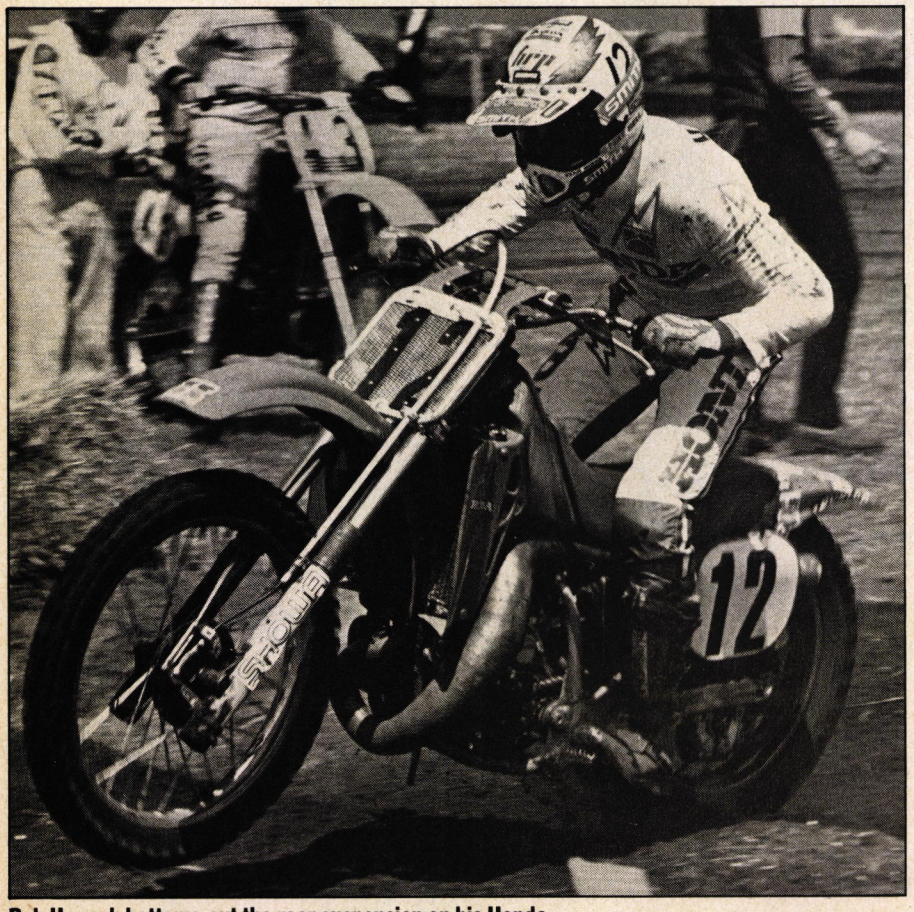


There's only room for one rider in Daytona's Turn One

And that one rider is Bob Hannah, taking the inside line.



Bob Hannah bottoms-out the rear suspension on his Honda

He's extended himself this year, by riding hard in every moto.

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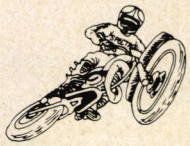

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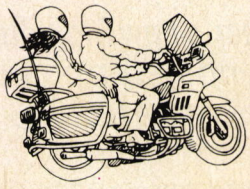

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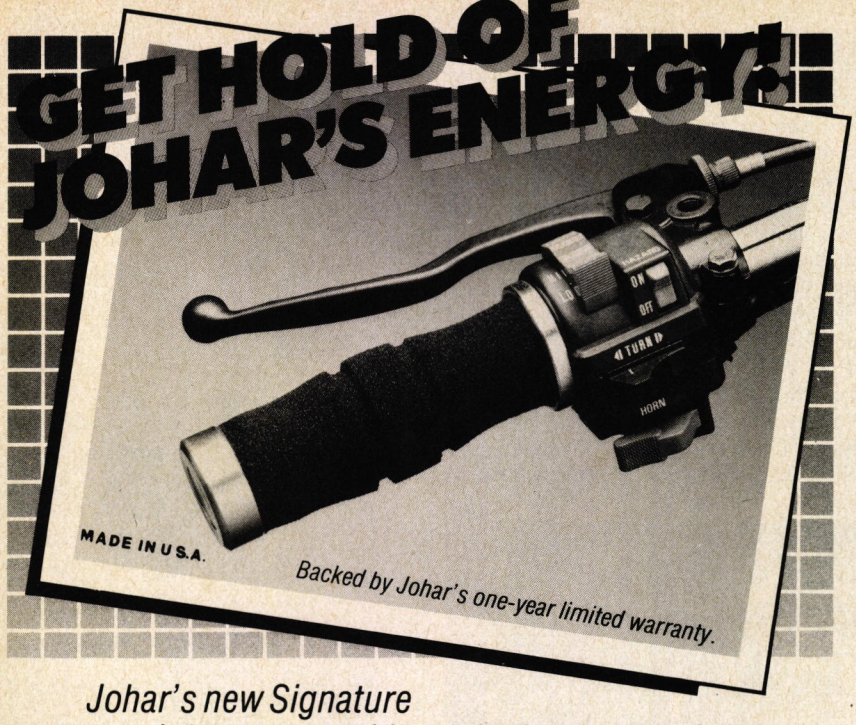

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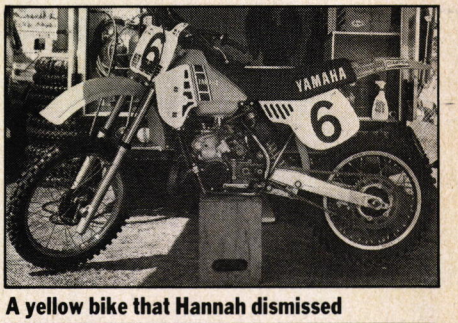
Hannah passes in the air

Taking the highroad to first place.

in the season, and anything can happen. However, some people question Hannah's durability; at 26 he's considered over the hill. Even Hannah himself has said that, because of his age, winning is tougher now. "Guys like Dave (Bailey) leave the race and forget who won or who was second," said Hannah, adding, "They think about winning the next race."

But for riders Hannah's age, the next race can feel like the next *season*. Getting "up" prior to a race can be just as taxing as falling down during one. So far, Hannah's strategy has been to take one race at a time, a pace that's proven comfortable yet effective. After all, five wins in the first nine races isn't bad. Even for someone who prefers to win them all. —*Dain Gingerelli*



A yellow bike that Hannah dismissed

They make better berms, he said.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1983 DAVID DEWHURST

The Honda Supercross special

Hannah's fast red bike.

Continued

ROADRACING:

Vintage-Bike Racing

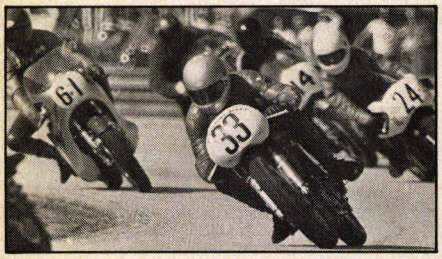
Yesterday and today.

• American roadrace enthusiasts have discovered something new: old bikes. Or, as Daytona Speedway's unofficial vintage-bike race director Will Harding put it, "People that grew up with Hondas (in the Sixties and Seventies) appreciate the old stuff now."

But they're doing more than just appreciating that "old stuff"; they're *racing* it, as well. Norton Manx and Matchless G50 thumpers, along with Bultaco TSS and Yamaha TD-1B two-strokes, once again are rolling on American asphalt.

Some of those old-bike racers are transforming their vintage iron, however. They're utilizing disc brakes, slicks, and in some instances refabricating swingarms and complete frames to turn those vintage bikes into modern, sophisticated racing hybrids. And that trend, say racers like Tony Murphy, is a form of American hot-rodding that could ruin vintage racing.

Murphy, whose motorcycle racing background extends into the Fifties, currently races a Norton Manx on the West Coast.



Vintage racers at Daytona Speedway

New life for old iron.

Roger Reiman and his old XR750

The former Daytona King returns.

Continued

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ROADRACING:

And his point of view on vintage bikes is that they should only be raced for the "fun of it." Murphy blames East Coast racers for diluting the nostaligia of vintage racing in a quest for more speed. "They're trying to update old bikes to current technology," he says. And that, according to Murphy, not only negates the purpose of vintage-bike racing but pulls the plug on the fun, as well. He says vintage racebikes should retain their original parts, although for reasons of safety—and availability—modern tires, other than slicks, should be allowed.

It's a controversial subject right now, but the controversy might come to an end soon. Last spring a national rules committee for vintage racing was formed, with Murphy on the board. He's joined by former AMA Grand National Champion Dick Mann and vintage-bike collector Rob Iannucci, owner of Team Obsolete. The committee's plan is to draw-up tighter rules to clarify the purpose of vintage racing, while making provisions for technical and safety modifications.

Murphy is enthusiastic about the effect the rules committee will have on vintage racing. As he put it, "They're good old motorcycles. I'm proud of bikes from my era; I don't want to change them." And, given Murphy's seat on the committee, he probably won't have to. *—Dain Gingerelli*

Vesco's and Murphy's Law

Who were those old guys, anyway?

• A good place to measure the progress of motorcycle roadracing technology is Willow Springs Raceway. Situated in Southern California's Mojave Desert, Willow Springs has hardly changed at all—with the exception of new asphalt paving—since it was first laid-out in 1955. People who raced there in the early years still would recognize the nine-turn track today. Randy Mamola currently holds the track record with a 1:26, 103.0-mph lap, which he set on a Suzuki 500cc square-four. In the Sixties, Mike Hailwood lapped the circuit on his single-cylinder Norton Manx 500 at about 1:40, or 89.9 mph.

Twenty years later, single-cylinder Nortons still are lapping Willow Springs

Tony Murphy lays down the law to an RD400 rider in Turn One at Willow Springs

Basically the law is this: If it can win, it will win.

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at times close to what Mike The Bike once posted. "Actually, we're doing 1:44s," said Tony Murphy, who, along with Don Vesco (who holds the motorcycle land speed record, as well), races a Norton in the American Road Racing Association's Vintage Class.

Since the old-bike entry list is slim, the vintage machines share the grid with the 450cc Production Class, which is dominated by Yamaha RDs. And even though the two classes are scored separately, during the race Vesco and Murphy set their sights on Yamahas. These two make no bones about trying to beat the two-strokes, and they almost did, too, in their first encounter with mixed-class racing. Murphy and Vesco placed third and fourth *overall.*

After the race, Murphy said, "Our bikes are slow in accelerating, but once you get them going, they're fun to ride." Vesco explained his fourth-overall finish by saying that even though Willow's nine turns hadn't changed in 28 years, he still "shut off too soon, and came out slower off the turns." Both men, though, are looking toward the future. "I think with a little more time on the track, Donnie and I can turn .41s," Murphy said, sounding confident that his overhead-valve British bike can beat the two-stroke twin-cylinder Yamahas.

But even if they don't, they've already put in quite a showing; it's been decades since these Nortons and their riders last raced at Willow. "We're not any lighter now, either," added Murphy. But it was Vesco who summed up their new Team Old theory: "You're only as young as you feel." And in the case of Don Vesco, Tony Murphy and a couple of vintage Nortons, that's feeling pretty young.

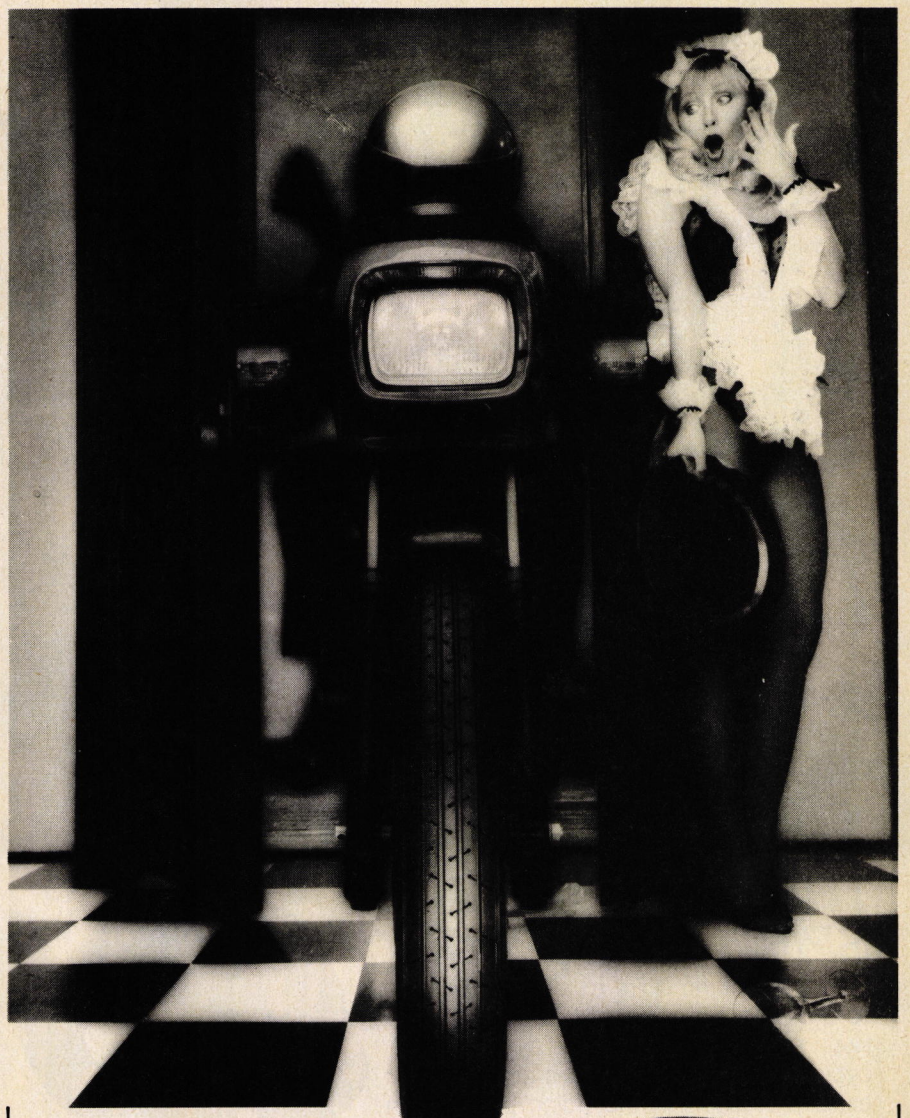
—Dain Gingerelli

Don Vesco and his Norton Manx

Feeling 25 years younger.

Continued

'AVON HAULING.'



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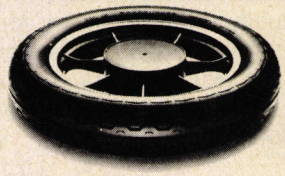

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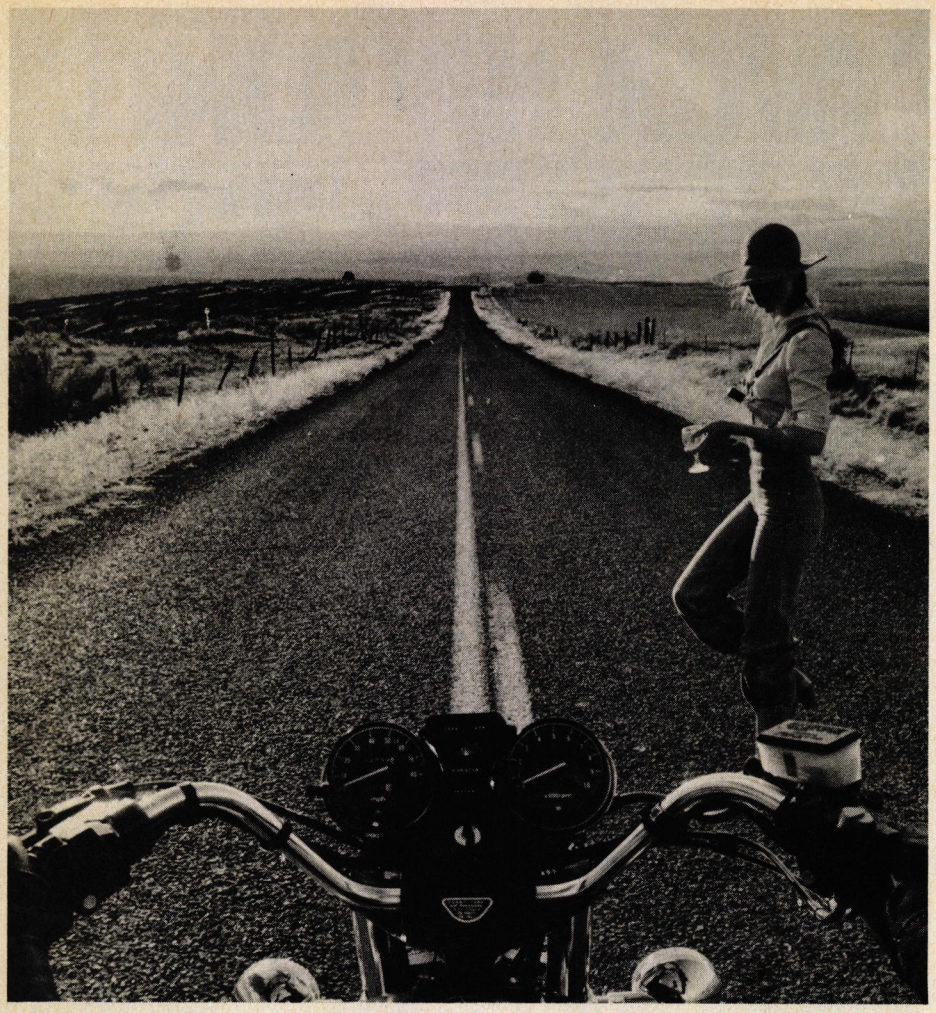

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Pit Bits

Kasakov leads a heat race

Keeping the title on ice.

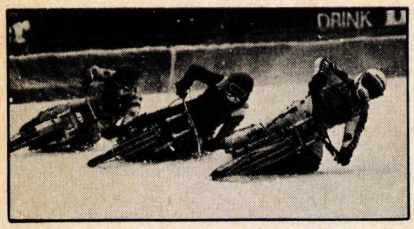
• Russian on ice: Russia's ice-racing expert, Sergei Kasakov, successfully defended his Ice Speedway title last March by defeating fellow countryman Anatoly Bondarenko, and 14 other racers, in the annual two-day, 40-heat program. Bondarenko and Kasakov were tied, with 28 points each, after the tournament. A four-lap run-off race decided the championship, and Bondarenko's near-crash on the second lap was all Kasakov needed to slip by and win.

Bondarenko's final mistake

Giving Kasakov the Ice Final.

• Stitch in time: Third-place finisher in that tournament, Erik Stenlund of Sweden, almost didn't make the program. During Friday's practice Stenlund was involved in a two-bike crash, in which the ice-bike's rear tire buzz-sawed his arm. After 30 stitches, Stenlund returned to the Eindhoven, Holland track and lined up for the race.

• Icing on the track: According to the

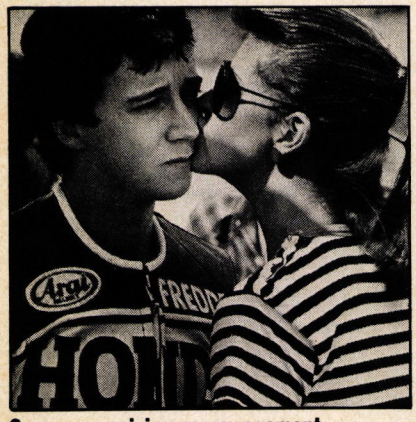


Ice Racers test the traction

Conditions obviously were perfect.

experts, the best way to groom a six-inch-thick ice surface for FIM-sanctioned racing is to freeze the track solid the night before, then, just hours before the racing begins, turn off the refrigeration. This allows the base to remain solid, yet softens the top layer so the three-inch-long spikes in the tires can dig in.

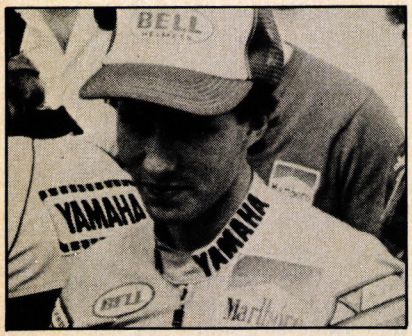
• Louisiana hat trick: Freddie Spencer is making himself at home in Europe. The lanky kid from Louisiana and his Honda NS500 have won the first three 500cc GPs of the season, giving him a 25-point lead in the world championship. Honda teammate Ron Haslam and Yamaha's Kenny Roberts are tied for second, with 20 points each.



Spencer receiving encouragement

But the hat trick was his doing.

• Those amazing Americans: While Spencer has been making sure "The Star Spangled Banner" gets played at all GP post-race ceremonies, two other Americans have decided to get into the



GP-newcomer Eddie Lawson

First appearance in victory circle.

Continued

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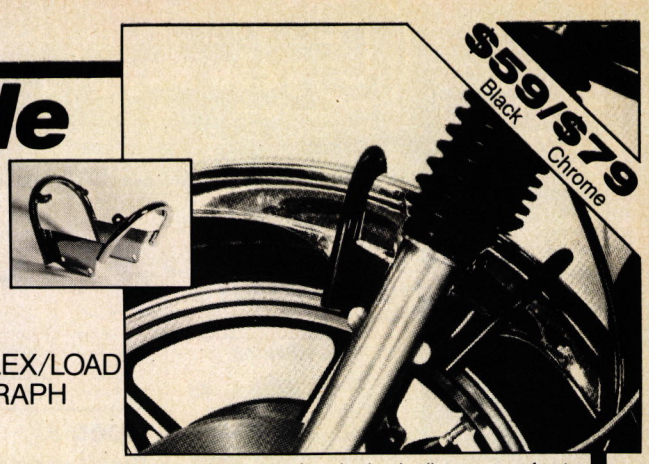

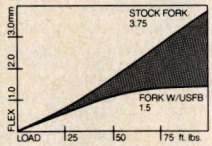

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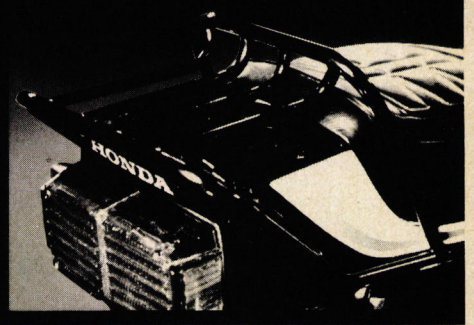

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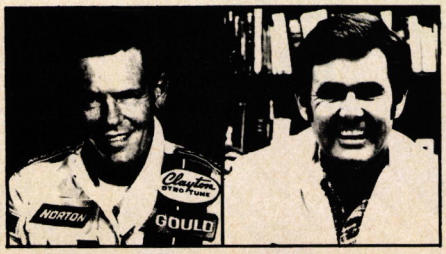

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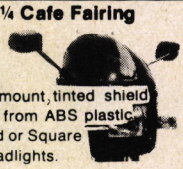

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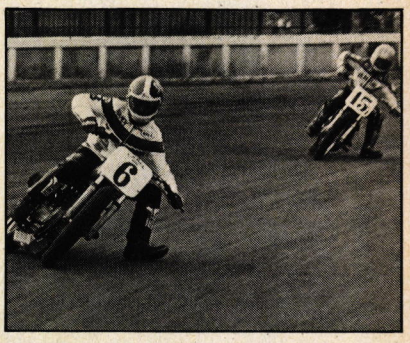
act, as well. Suzuki-mounted Randy Mamola and Yamaha's Eddie Lawson finished second and third, respectively, at the Italian GP to make it a one-two-three sweep for America.

• Xerox perfect: The two-moto format used for AMA National motocross events can be confusing. But at the Saddleback National last April, determining the overall winner was a snap; the top seven finishers in the 250cc race made life easy for the scorekeepers by duplicating their finishing order in both motos. Bob Hannah led the parade, with Rick Johnson, David Bailey, Scott Burnworth, Mike Bell, Billy Liles and Clint Hardick following in that order both times.

• Pro/Am: Dates have been finalized for this summer's AMA Pro/Am roadraces. The Portland Pro/AM will be July 23–24, while Seattle is set for September 10–11. The final two P/As are Willow Springs (September 17–18) and Daytona (October 1–2).



The Race of Champions begins this year

The CPS-best go to the ROC.

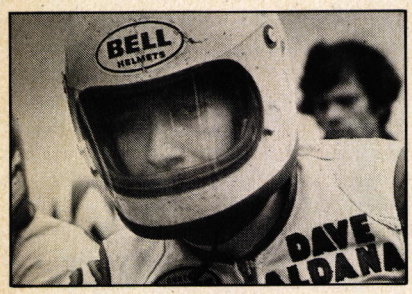
• Race of Champions: Stadium Motorsports, formerly specializing in Supercross racing only, will promote a Race of Champions for winners of Camel Pro Series races this season. According to SM, all CPS winners automatically are invited to the ROC, scheduled for October 15 at the Cal Expo in Sacramento. The race will be on the same mile-long oval used for the annual CPS race held there. And if Daytona-winner Kenny Roberts retires from his Yamaha/GP career after this season, we might see him entered on Bud Aksland's Harley-Davidson 750.

• The Second Billing: On the subject of Stadium Motorsports, there's been a lot of talk lately about SM-czar Mike Goodwin's success at filling stadiums, with last January's Supercross at Anaheim as the main topic. Tom Leigler, Anaheim Stadium manager, said, "The only man Mike Goodwin couldn't beat in (total) attendance (at Anaheim) was God. Billy Graham had three performances on one day, when the stadium only held 43,000, and that combined attendance exceeded Goodwin's."

• Regional roots: For years, AMA dirttrack touts have been saying the best half-milers come from the East, while the central region is home for shorttrack specialists and the West is noted for its TTers. A look at the calendar for the AMA regional expert series might explain why. All six eastern regional championship races are on half-mile tracks, while all but one western race is a TT. And of the six central races, three are shorttrack events.

• Numberless-plate series: Not all motorcycle competition requires numberplates and high-performance engines. Take, for example, the AMA/Dunlop Touring Elite Series that gets underway this summer. The street competition, which is promoted by Dunlop Tire and Rubber Company and sanctioned by the AMA, includes more than 100 events across the country. This year's agenda encompasses all of the AMA's 1983 Regional Road Riding Championships, National Road Riding Championships, District Tours, District Rallies and Grand Tours. The AMA/DTE series is open to all AMA members. For a free booklet describing the series in detail, write: AMA/Dunlop Touring Elite Series, Dept DTE, c/o AMA, Box 141, Westerville, Ohio 43081.

• Seasoned for rain or shine: Last year, for only the second time in its 35-year history, the Bonneville Nationals was rained out. To make sure that doesn't happen for 1983, the Southern California Timing Association, sanctioning body for the Bonneville Nationals, has moved Speed Week ahead one month and made provisions for an alternate date. Speed Week 1983 will be August 28 through September 3. Rain Week is September 25 through October 1.



Dave Aldana in 1973

Now he's awaiting OAS III.

• Quote Department: When Larry Huffman interviewed support-rider David Aldana at Honda's Daytona Superbike victory party, he noted that the 32-year-old roadracer was the only rider to appear in both "On Any Sunday" movies. Huffman then asked Aldana what he looked forward to in his racing career, which began in the late Sixties. Replied Aldana, "I'd like to get in another movie." —*Dain Gingerelli*

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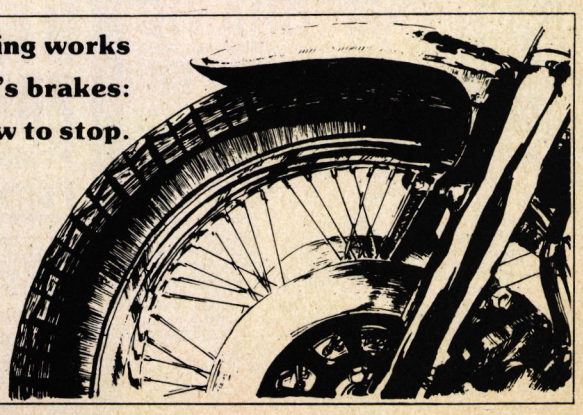

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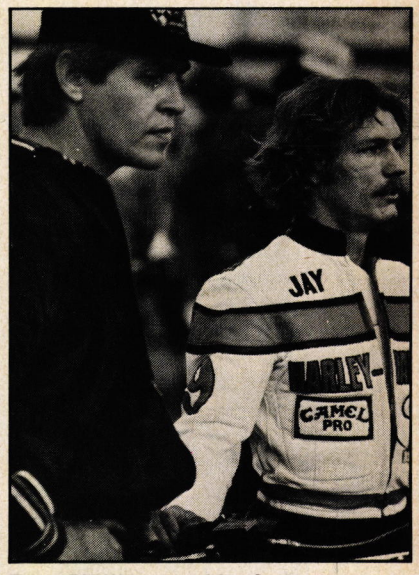
Winners & Losers

Sacked in Sacramento

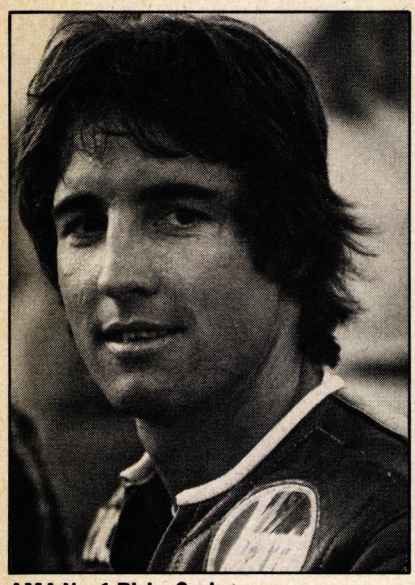
Jay Springsteen is caught napping on the final lap.



Tuner Bill Werner and Jay Springsteen
Fooled by the black flag.

• After 24 laps and 27 lead changes, Jay Springsteen thought he had the Sacramento Mile wrapped up. With only one lap to go, and Ricky Graham—with whom he had been dicing for the previous 16 laps—having just been black-flagged for dripping oil, Springsteen was counting his winnings. Everyone else in the race, so thought The Springer, was *way* back. So Springsteen, who has won more AMA Grand National and Mile events than any other racer, relaxed a little. He deserved an easy lap; he'd earned it. And the 11,422 spectators at Sacramento's Cal Expo complex thought so, too. In a few minutes Springsteen would be flanked by Bubba Shobert and teammate Randy Goss on the victory podium.

But Shobert had plans of his own. Coming into Turn Three of that final lap Shobert cut in hard, then passed Springsteen on the outside exiting Four. It was too late for Number 9 to react, and Shobert cruised to his first win of the year, which also put him in a tie with Randy Goss for the Camel Pro Series points lead.



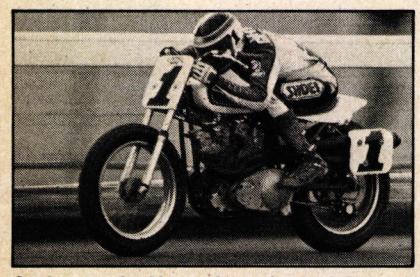
AMA No. 1 Ricky Graham

An oil crisis dropped him out.

Springsteen's immediate reaction was innocent enough. Since Shobert and Graham both wear red-white-and-black leathers, he thought it was Graham making a last-minute pass on him. "Then I saw the number 67," said Springsteen. Graham wears No. 1.

But that miscalculation fit right in with Springsteen's entire evening. His first misfortune came when the heat times were posted. He had won the third heat, unoffically the fastest heat of the night, which should have given him the pole position for the Main. The AMA timekeepers, however, had it differently, announcing Ricky Graham's heat as fastest. Springsteen would start the Main from the third spot on the front row. "I was cheated out of fast time because the (AMA's) clocks were wrong," said Springsteen, adding that even Team Honda's watches were in accordance with Harley-boss Dick O'Brien's.

Of course, Springsteen's troubles with the clocks were insignificant compared to his misjudgment of Shobert during that final lap. "It should have been my race," Springer lamented. And he was right: It should have been—but he doesn't have to look far to find out why it wasn't. *—Dain Gingerelli*



Graham tucked in on the main straight

He had to pull in on lap 24.

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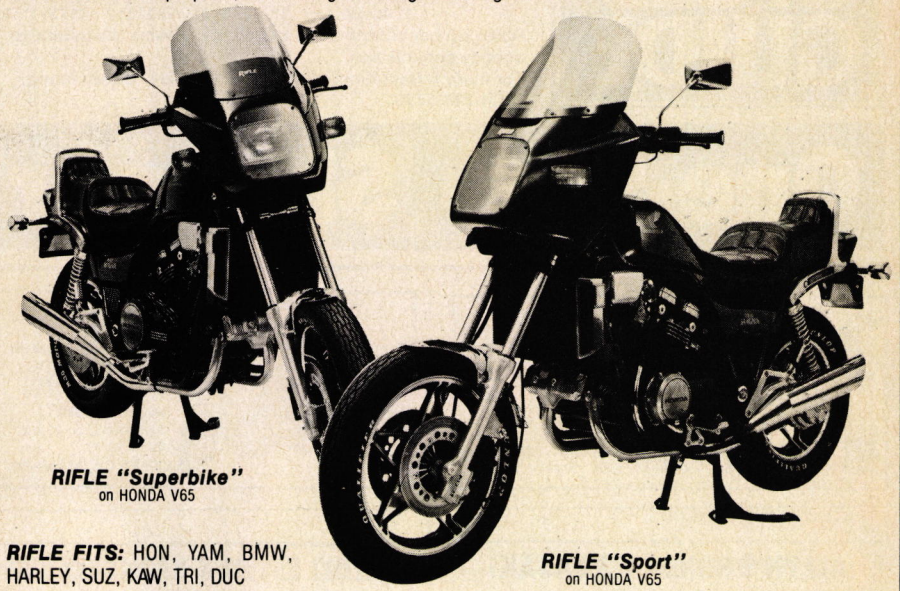

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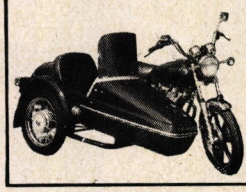

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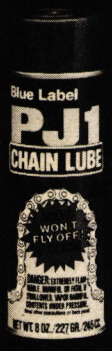

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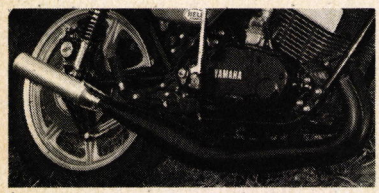

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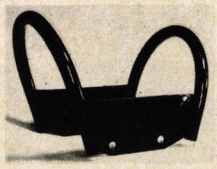

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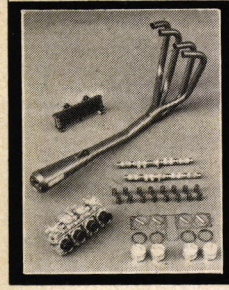

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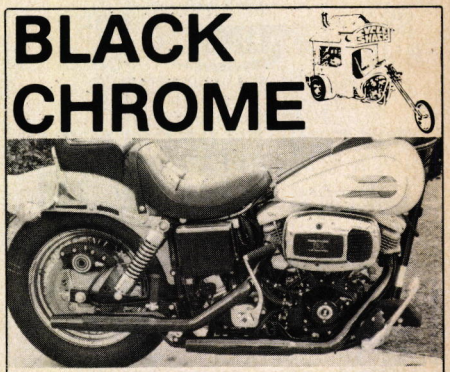

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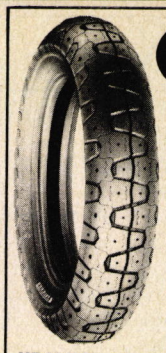

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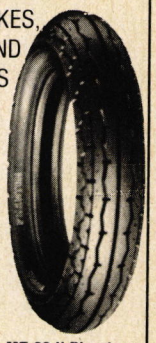

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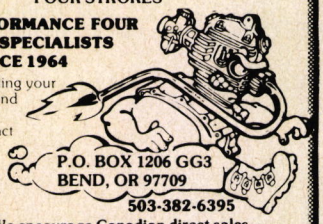

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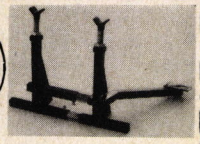

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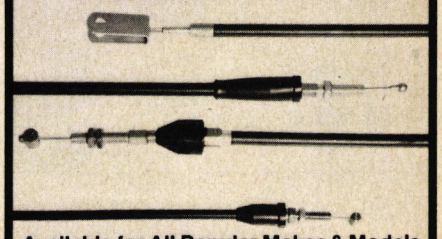

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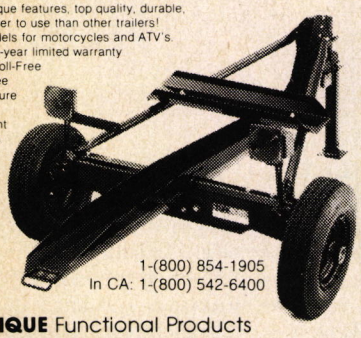

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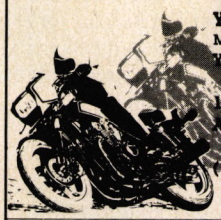

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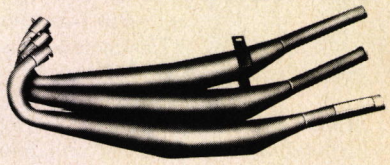

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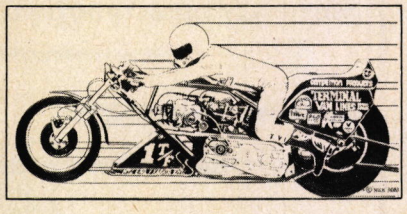
BOOSTBIKE BLAHS

I really enjoyed reading the turbo comparison article (March '83) but I'm not that impressed with the turbobikes themselves. Nice, but they seem to have too many drawbacks.

In that same issue, however, there was a Ride/Report on a supercharged Gold Wing. Now *that* was impressive. I can't believe what a fairly simple add-on did to the GL. Supercharging seems to have so much going for it. Why don't the manufacturers start putting some money into production supercharged bikes instead of wasting it on turbos?

Mark Fillion
Newmarket, New Hampshire

What about Kawasaki's Turbo? Is this one a waste, too?—ed.



NOT ENOUGH

I'm a staunch Yamaha loyalist, have been for years, but when will that company get out of the farm leagues and into the majors? Finally, I'm in a position to buy the bike of my dreams, an 1100cc superbike. But my choice is limited to Honda, Kawasaki or Suzuki. I'd love to see Yamaha in this race with an 1100cc Seca, a chain-drive bike that looks just like the Seca 900. Considering the power output of the 900, think what 200cc more would be like.

Roy Christopher
Dartmouth, Canada

Probably 200cc faster—ed.

SCOLDING THE KIDS

I read, with both interest and amusement, your article on the vee-twins (April '83). My amusement was due mainly to the viewpoints expressed by Ron Lawson and Charles Everitt. It would be interesting to know the ages of these two gentlemen and how long each has been riding. I think that these two are a far sight away from being motorcycle enthusiasts. I think they're nothing more than computer jockeys. To them, if a machine isn't complicated it's automatically outdated, and therefore useless.

J.D. Hoover
Sutton, West Virginia

Our wizened Mr. Lawson and equally antiquated Everitt not enthusiasts? Shame on your hardtail, Hoover—ed.

PLATE PLEA

How do you guys do it? Looking through back issues of CYCLE GUIDE, my friends and I notice that most of the test bikes never have license plates on them. If you test ride as much as you say you do, how do you get by on the public roads without plates? Or at least temporary tags?

Bill Sebastian
Richardson, Texas

We're just too fast for them. Actually, California's DMV doesn't issue plates right away. The bikes are working on temporary permits—ed.

PARADISE FOUND

I was considering selling my Triumph Bonneville. That is, I was considering it before I read Ted West's recent column, "Paradise Sold" (May '83). Thanks for waking me up and making me realize that I already have what I want. I now know that if I sold my Triumph I'd hate myself in the morning.

Glenn Maddock
Carencro, Louisiana

And probably every afternoon you saw a Bonneville on the streets, too—ed.

DUSTY RUSTY

Maybe you can help me. I've seen a tabloid-type publication with classified ads for antique bikes and parts. For the life of me I can't remember the name of that paper. Dealers I've asked tell me they're not familiar with any such publication and can offer no help. Could you tell me what group or organization prints the type of paper I'm looking for? I'm sure it was a national publication and I remember that it looked quite professional.

John DeNardo
Buffalo, New York

A note to Walneck's Vintage M/C, 7923 Janes Ave., Woodbridge, Illinois 60515 should get you what you're looking for—ed.

CLEAN IT UP

Why do you have to use cuss words in your stories? Is that really necessary? I enjoy reading your magazine but not the cuss words. I just renewed my subscription, and if you stop the cuss words, keep sending the magazine. If not, cancel my subscription. I hope we can work together on this matter.

Bruce Moore
Junction City, Oregon

Cuss words? You must have the wrong magazine, Moore—ed.

STOKING THE FLAME

What do you think of a special project-bike article, a Yama-Davidson. You could take a Virago 920 and put a set of aftermarket shorty-dual exhausts on it, graft, bend and bondo a Fat-Bob rear fender in place and hammer on a set of five-gallon Bob-And-A-Half tanks. What you'd end up with is one class machine with a cruising range of over 200 miles. All at about four-fifths the price of a Harley.

Colin Krefft
Vallejo, California

You take a Virago 920 and do whatever you want to with it. Leave us out of this—ed.

MIDNIGHT SPARKLE

I agree with the conclusion of your article on the vee-twins (April '83). But if the Virago needed more flash to win, ". . . drab, . . . plain . . .", why didn't you check out an XV920MK Midnight Virago? Like mine.

Deek Emmons
Houston, Texas

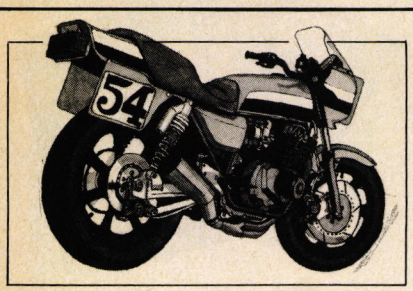
Didn't you say you agreed with us?—ed.

HARLEY AND THE I.T.C.

Congratulations to the Milwaukee Cry Babies. Do they really think their success with the tariff will help them sell more than five percent of the market? They're wrong, of course. You know it, and 95 percent of the motorcycle market knows it. A higher price for "rice burners" won't stop us from buying the quality machines we want. Harley-Davidson's inability to produce anything but aged machines, and its refusal to change with the times, is the fault of H-D management. Not the Japanese.

Dave Lawson
Noblesville, Indiana

LETTERS



THEY'RE SERIOUS

I can't believe what I read in the April issue. "ITC Rules In Harley's Favor"? Does Harley-Davidson really think that by increasing the import duty on Japanese bikes, thus raising their price and lowering the number shipped to the U.S., more riders will buy Harleys? I don't know about other cyclists, but I buy bikes based on function, reliability, ride and price. Not availability or charisma.

Come on, Harley, wake up. Build something the riding public wants. Build a bike with more than "looks and sound." If you had a well-engineered machine with a competitive pricetag you wouldn't have to worry about Japanese imports.

Rob Phillips
Liverpool, New York

MORE OF THE SAME

Having owned a Super Glide (1977 vintage) and having established that mechanically it's a piece of antiquated junk, it's no wonder that Harley would like to have a big-bike exclusive in this country. I guess their plan is to force more than the small group of animals in search of iron testicles, or the brain-washed union pukes who buy American and consider the rest of us commies, to buy and ride their "Milwaukee Miracle." No thanks, Harley.

Larry Koehn
Atlanta, Georgia

THIS ONE'S READY

I never thought I'd hear myself saying this, but I'd love a new Harley-Davidson. Yeah, I know it sounds crazy, but I can't help myself. The smooth lines, the sharp paint, the cute ears and the curly tail—I'm hooked. I'm almost ready to plop down my hard-earned cash for one of those H-D piggybanks. Sorry Milwaukee, but this is the closest I'll ever come to purchasing one of your products.

Tom Gates
Glendale, California

And can we assume you'd use it to save your pennies for something from the Orient?—ed. ●

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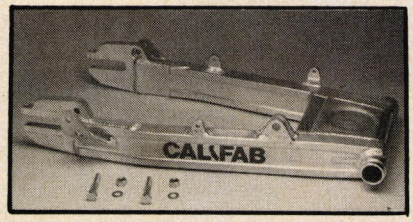

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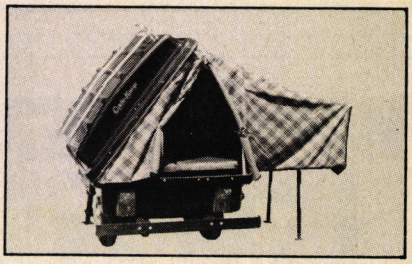

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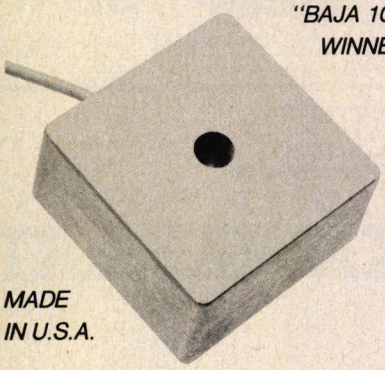

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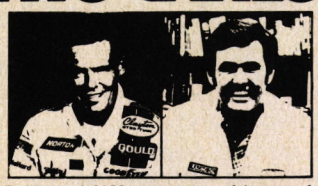

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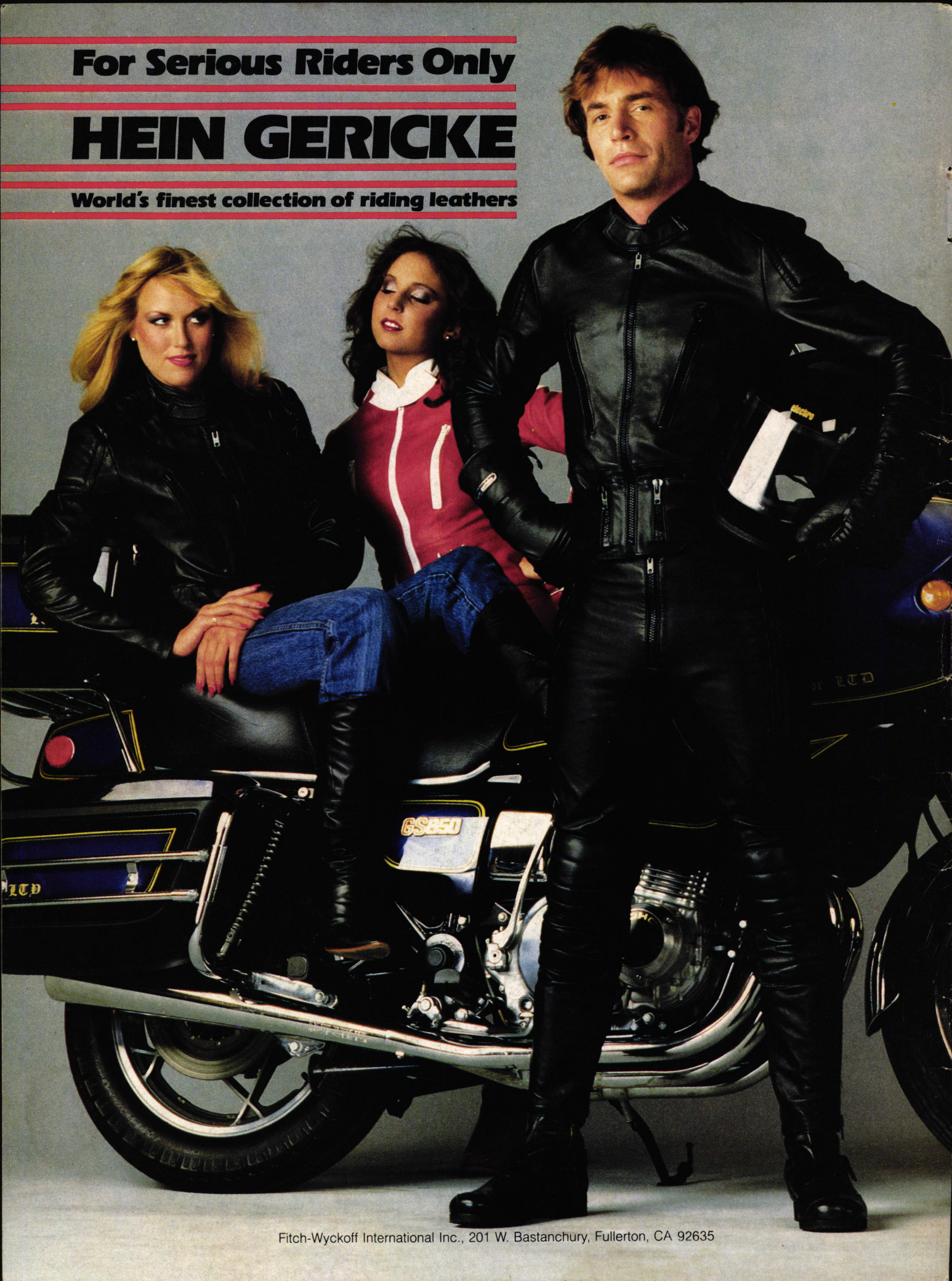
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